

# Culture in Poland



# CULTURE IN POLAND

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## POLAND'S HISTORY AND CULTURE

### MORE THAN 1000 YEARS AGO

The medieval chronicler who in 966 A.D. wrote just three words: *Mesco dux baptisatur*, not only issued a certificate of baptism to the first historical Polish ruler but also a birth certificate to the Polish state. It has become the custom to count Poland's age from that date. But, after all, states do not emerge all of a sudden onto the arena of history, their appearance is usually preceded by many centuries during which authority is gradually constituted within a specific territory inhabited by a specific community.

It was no different in Poland. The area lying in the basins of the Odra and the Vistula, which was enclosed by the frontiers of Mieszko I's state (which corresponds roughly to the present territory of Poland), had been inhabited by proto-Slav tribes more or less since the middle of the first millennium B.C. From that time dates our first source of information, namely a mention by Herodotus about the Neures who had formed a powerful union on vast though ill-defined territories, rivaling with the nomadic Scythians; most probably, the Neures were proto-Slavs. Pliny and Tacitus knew much more about the Sarmatians and Wends, living on the banks of the Vistula, whose names have become part of Polish mythology. The Alexandrian geographer Ptolemy was the first to use the name "Slavs", albeit in a distorted form.

Sometime around the 5th and the 6th centuries A.D. the population of the primitive Slav community, described under various names by ancient writers, began to break into separate peoples from which, after several centuries, sprang the contemporary Slav nations. The development of socio-political relations in the Slav lands in the first millennium A.D. is little known because of the paucity of written sources; but it is known that fairly large tribal communities began to emerge, ruled by princes. Thanks to the work done by archaeologists, the material culture of these Slavonic — and proto-Polish — peoples and tribes is better



known. They were settled peoples, using wooden implements, usually bound with iron. Hunting was only a sporadic, extra occupation of the proto-Poles.

Ibrahim Ibn Yacub of Tortosa, the famous Jewish traveller from Mohammedan Spain, wrote in 966 that Mieszko's country "abound<sup>d</sup> in food: meat, honey and fish"; similar opinions about the riches of the Polish lands were expressed by other contemporary travellers and chroniclers such as al-Idrisi and Adam of Bremen, who compared them to the promised land.

In the mid-9th century, a Frankish monk compiled a fairly detailed list of tribes living north of the Greater Moravian State. This information probably originated in Bavaria, hence the name: Bavarian Geographer. The areas inhabited by the tribes listed by the Bavarian Geographer may as a rule be easily found on the map.

The historians of the origins of Poland are fascinated by a puzzle connected with the tribe of Vislane. This is what happened according to the *Life of Methodius*, the famous missionary of the Eastern Empire.

"A pagan duke, very powerful, ruling over the Vislanes, abused the Christians and did them harm. Methodius sent emissaries to him and bade them say to him: It would be well for you, my son, to accept baptism of your own free will and in your own land, lest you be baptised by force and in a foreign land. And so it came to pass."

It is not known what dramatic events lay behind that brief account. But, with the backing of archaeological research, it is possible to conclude that the state of the Vislanes was highly developed in the 9th century and that it became a very desirable prey to powerful Moravia. The "very powerful" duke was imprisoned. His lands fell under the rule of his southern neighbours and, perhaps, became Christianised in the Eastern rite long before the "official" baptism of Poland.

Let us forget about these conjectures. Although the Vislanes were the first of the Polish tribes to appear on the stage of history, the role of creators of the Polish statehood went to the Polanie (Polanes), the inhabitants of the country on the middle Warta, in the neighbourhood of Gniezno and Poznań.

#### TEN CENTURIES OF CHANGING FORTUNES

Doubtless, when the duke of the Polanes decided to be baptised, he did so for political reasons in order to avoid the disaster which probably befell the duke of the Vislanes. In those times, to join the Christian community was to attain the status of independence, protection from conversion by force, and opened the door to the world of culture.

In the middle of the 10th century, the army of Otto I defeated the Slav tribes inhabiting the territories between the Elbe and the Odra, occupied their land and destroyed the population which had stubbornly continued to believe in its ancient gods. Only the Odra separated Mieszko's territory from the German invaders. The duke of the Polanes could no longer delay his decision. In 965, he married Dobrawka, daughter of Boleslaus, the Christian king of Bohemia. A year later he himself became a Christian, probably in the Bavarian town of Regensburg. The prudent duke preferred to seek the protection of the pope through fraternal Bohemia and distant Bavaria than to avail himself of the services of the neighbouring Saxon bishops who sponsored the German expansion to the Slav lands.

Thus, Mieszko's state obtained legal recognition and rapidly became a major power, uniting within its frontiers the other Polish tribes: the Mazovians, Pomeranians, Sienzans, Vislanes and several smaller ones. This integration process had begun before 966, but was now accelerated. Ibrahim Ibn Yacub wrote with admiration that Mieszko "had 3,000 armoured warriors, of whom a hundred are worth a thousand others". In 972, Mieszko's troops supported by Bohemian cavalry routed the army of Margrave Hodo at Cedynia. Soon Mieszko began to conduct his own policy on the territory of the German empire, playing off the various dynastic intrigues there. The Saxon monk Widukind described his power — and generosity — with evident respect. In 986, at a congress in Quedlinburg, Mieszko offered his allies, of all things, a camel, which caused quite a sensation in Western Europe.

Mieszko's son and successor, Boleslaus the Brave, continued the work begun by his father and extended Poland's frontiers in all directions, on the Baltic, beyond the Odra, to the other side of the Carpathians, and in the eastern borderlands. During the lifetime of the Emperor Otto III, relations with the Germans were good. In the year 1000, the emperor visited Gniezno, the capital of Poland, and presented Boleslaus with the "spear of St. Maurice", a symbol of sovereignty. Soon after Otto III died, and a long period of Polish-German wars ensued, waged with varying fortunes. But the final outcome was favourable to Boleslaus. Poland retained the majority of her territorial acquisitions.

Parallel to the growth of military power, the development proceeded of a feudal society drawing on Western European and Russian patterns, but with its own cultural traditions. The integration of the Polish lands was reflected in the fact that the European chroniclers of those times used the name Polonia thus giving the name of the dominant tribe to the whole of those territories.

In 1025, Boleslaus the Brave, tired of waiting for the crown which

the pope had long since promised him, instructed the archbishop residing in Gniezno to perform the official act of coronation. But he did not long enjoy his royal title, for he died in the same year.

The successors of Mieszko I and Boleslaus the Brave were not as successful as the first two members of the Piast dynasty. In Poland, as in the whole of Europe, the feudal system flourished for several centuries, weakening the central authority and leading to regional divisions. Despite the sporadic successes of Boleslaus the Bold and Boleslaus Wrymouth, Poland lost Pomerania and Silesia, while the rest of the country, divided into ever smaller parts, had difficulty in maintaining its independence. Hordes of Tartars devastated her lands, while raids by Bohemians, Prussians and Lithuanians were frequent and in the north, at the mouth of the Vistula, the most threatening enemy of all was emerging: the Order of the Cross (Teutonic Knights).

In 1226, the Teutonic Knights were invited by Conrad, Duke of Mazovia, who gave them the region of Chełmno to settle on in order to defend his borders from the incursions of the pagan Prussians and Sudovians. The Knights conquered the Baltic peoples, and imposed on them a rule of brutal oppression. Then they turned against the Polish dukedoms.

The period of feudal disintegration in the 12th and 13th centuries which was a time of political decline in the history of Poland, nevertheless brought a demographic, economic, social and cultural development.

At the beginning of the 14th century, one of the Polish dukes, Ladislaus of Kuyawy, nicknamed the Short, succeeded in unifying most of the Polish territories, stemming the Teutonic aggression and establishing friendly relations with Lithuania. His son, Casimir the Great, the last of the House of Piast, continued the task of rebuilding, recovered some of the territories lost during the disintegration into separate duchies, strengthened the economy and promoted the country's cultural development. In 1364, he founded in Cracow a university patterned on that of Bologna; it was the second university, after Prague, in Central Europe, older than any of the German universities. Literature flourished, and so did art, already showing Gothic influences. But all these favourable changes were overshadowed by the danger looming in the north: the Teutonic state was growing in might, fed by conquests, aided by the whole of Germany, and also by the profits it drew from its control over Polish trade, whose main artery was the Vistula. Not until 1410 was the might of the Order broken. Polish and Lithuanian troops, brilliantly led by King Ladislaus Jagiello, inflicted a terrible defeat on the Teutonic Knights at Grunwald; this battle was one of the largest-scale encounters in the history of the Middle

Ages. Although it did not give Poland a decisive political success, for Malbork, the capital of the Order, repelled a siege, yet the State of the Order never regained its former might. Polish diplomacy deserves a large share of the credit for this. At the Council of Constance, in 1415, Paweł Włodkowic (Paulus Vladimiri), the rector of the Cracow Academy, presented theses laying bare the false intentions of the policies pursued by the Order, and gained Poland the support of many influential Western rulers. King Casimir IV, son of Ladislaus Jagiello, completed his father's work; in 1466, after the thirteen years' war, Malbork and Pomerania including Gdańsk, and Warmia became part of Poland. The remainder of the lands of the Teutonic Order were made into vassal territories.

Under Casimir IV and his successors, Sigismund the Old and Sigismund Augustus, Poland, in union with Lithuania, grew to be one of the largest European powers; she traded far and wide, and experienced a golden age in the realm of culture and intellectual life. Polish literature and music flourished. The Cracow University became one of the most lively centres of international learning, attended by students from all over Europe. Many Poles in turn studied in Padua, Bologna, Paris or Heidelberg. Nicolaus Copernicus published his memorable treatise *De revolutionibus*, which revolutionized the contemporary view of the world. The political writings of Andrzej Frycz-Modziewski, marked by a spirit of democracy, became famous in Europe. Religious dissenters enjoyed a tolerance rarely found elsewhere; Sigismund Augustus's words reflected his fine humanistic attitude and political astuteness: "I am not king of your consciences". The Reformation gained large numbers of adherents in Poland. Numerous dissidents from other countries came to Poland to escape religious persecution at home. Polish thinkers and statesmen were very friendly with Erasmus of Rotterdam and other luminaries of philosophy.

The 16th century marked the apogee of Poland's development and the 17th the beginning of a deep-rooted crisis. The authority and prestige of the elected kings declined, the burghers lost their old privileges, even the mass of the gentry ceased to play a decisive role in the country's government. On the other hand, the great noble families grew in power, but their policies were egoistic and often ran counter to the national interest. In the wake of Counter-Reformation, a wave of obscurantism and contempt for learning rolled across Poland. The Cracow University declined, literary works were of indifferent quality, religious fanaticism prevailed. The greed of the nobility, who imposed increasingly heavy burdens on the serfs, led to desperate revolts, particularly in the eastern borderlands. Numerous wars along nearly all the frontiers weakened the state and its economy. In the middle of



the century, almost the whole of Poland was overrun by the Swedes; and although soon after a patriotic upsurge liberated the country after a long and bloody war, Poland emerged greatly weakened. King John Sobieski, a brilliant military commander, once more made famous the Polish art of war by defeating the huge Turkish army investing Vienna, but these were the last flashes of the ancient glory. At the beginning of the 18th century, under the kings of the house of Wettin a political and cultural decline in Poland can be observed. Her lands, deprived of proper defences, became the marching grounds for the armies of the neighbouring powers, her Seyms were dictated to by Russian ambassadors, her ruling class was apathetic and absorbed in internecine squabbles between the great noble families. The first partition of Poland occurred in 1772: Russia, Prussia and Austria took Pomerania, a considerable part of the rich region of Great Poland, the territory of Little Poland up to the Vistula and the San, and large tracts of territory in the east.

This disaster had a sobering effect on the people and helped increase the trend of progressive changes. In the year following the first partition, the Commission of National Education was set up, the first ministry of education in the world, which inaugurated a radical reform of schools at all levels. During the reign of King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, a wise and sensitive ruler, the voices of patriotic forces, nourished by the ideas of the Enlightenment, began to be heard. Under the king's personal patronage the arts flourished. The works of the French *Encyclopedistes* were widely read. Polish literature and political writing advocating the need of radical social transformations were given a new lease of life. Hugo Kołłątaj and Stanisław Staszic were among the most prominent thinkers in Europe. Finally, in 1791, the Sejm passed the Constitution of the 3rd of May, which contained all the provisions necessary to alleviate the social tensions, improve the country's economy, strengthen the government, and rebuild the armed forces; time, alas, proved too short. The reactionary forces, hostile to the Constitution, had recourse to Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia, who had for a long time been plotting to subjugate Poland completely. War broke out, short and unsuccessful. The Russian armies overran the country and, together with Prussia, carried out a second partition (1793). The Constitution of the 3rd of May was repealed. Even the desperate insurrection led by Tadeusz Kościuszko proved of no avail. After initial victories, the modest forces of the insurgents yielded to superior force. In 1795, the third partition of Poland took place, which erased her from the map of Europe.

The state ceased to exist, but not the nation. During Napoleon's campaigns, the hopes of Poles revived; they fought by the side of the

Emperor for their own independence to the bitter end. The Congress of Vienna put paid to those hopes. It sanctioned the partitions of Poland among the powers of the Holy Alliance, leaving only part of her territory as an autonomous Kingdom of Poland with the tsar of Russia as its king. In November 1830, the Poles rose up in arms counting on the support of the Western powers, especially France. In vain — the November insurrection was crushed. It was then that the French minister Delavignani told the French Parliament: "*L'ordre règne à Varsovie*" — a sentence that has become notorious.

Terror was let loose in Poland. The political life of the Poles was transferred to foreign soil. The patriots who did not lose all their belief in the revival of the country foregathered mainly in Paris. Their most prominent spiritual leaders were the poets, Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki. The fact that the Polish nation did not lose its national consciousness and unity, despite 123 years of subjugation by the three occupying powers, was due in a decisive degree to the preservation of cultural ties and its attachment to tradition and customs (more will be said about this in the chapter on literature).

The revolutions of 1848 again revived hopes — and again they failed. The Poles fought "for our freedom and yours" on the battlefields of Europe but gained nothing for themselves. Insurgent movements in Cracow and Great Poland were likewise defeated.

The next uprising, known as the January Uprising (1863-64), ended in a blood bath and in prison chains. And again, the dreamed-of help from the West never came.

The end of the 19th century was a time in which political parties of a modern type began to take shape in the partitions. The most radical of them was the Proletariat, the first Polish workers' party. In the countryside a peasant movement came into existence. In 1905, the workers' left rose up in arms, but even this revolutionary upsurge yielded no direct results.

In the wake of the Great October Revolution and the defeat of the central powers in the First World War, Poland regained her independence. The revolutionary Soviet government recognized the rights of the Poles to independence without reservations, while the Versailles Treaty resurrected the Polish state. The process of formation of Polish frontiers was drawn out over several years, favourably influenced by the risings of the Silesians and the inhabitants of Great Poland, though they did not gain all their objectives.

In the period between the wars, the Polish state had considerable success in blending together the territories of the three former partitions and in rallying the people round the common national traditions and cultural values, but did not solve the accumulated social problems

and failed to extricate the national economy from its profound backwardness.

In 1939, Poland was the first to oppose the advance of Nazism in Europe. Although she suffered a crushing defeat in the same year, she inaugurated the armed resistance of the democratic peoples of Europe to the brown cataclysm.

The September defeat did not interrupt the Poles' armed struggle for a moment. Polish detachments fought on the battlefields of France and Norway, Libya and Italy, again in France, in Belgium and the Netherlands. Polish airmen were prominent in the Battle of Britain; the Polish army formed in the USSR fought on Soviet soil, took part in the liberation of Poland and ended its battle trail in Berlin. In the country itself and during the whole of the Nazi occupation considerable partisan forces fought in the towns and forests. Poland paid for her share in the victory over Nazism with the death of over six million of her citizens and countless losses in the national wealth, including the total destruction of her capital, Warsaw.

The year 1944 saw the creation of People's Poland. She arose as an ethnically uniform country, within new boundaries, on more or less the same territory as that occupied under Mieszko I, at the time of her birth as a state.

Poland numbers over 33 million inhabitants who are engaged in building a socialist system in fraternal friendship with her neighbours, and in mutually profitable cooperation with all the peoples of the world who desire such cooperation. The idea of peaceful coexistence and the broad development of international relations in all fields of life is the corner stone of Polish policy. During the thirty years of her existence, People's Poland has turned from a poor agricultural country producing primary commodities into an urbanized country with comprehensively developed industry which has risen far above the pre-war level of production; a country of increasingly modern agriculture, of universal education and rich culture inspired both by tradition and by modern, progressive intellectual and artistic trends.

## MONUMENTS OF ARCHITECTURE

The wars which ravaged Poland over the centuries, have reduced the architectural heritage handed down to us in stone, brick and timber by former generations. The Second World War was particularly destructive; during the hostilities, primarily as a result of the Nazis' systematic and deliberate destruction of all memorials of the Polish past, Poland lost 7,500 monuments, including 23 Romanesque and about 2,000 Gothic buildings.

All that has survived of Poland's architectural legacy is looked after with great care. The number of legally protected historical buildings exceeds 35,000, of which 64 are of the highest artistic, historical and scientific value on a world scale.

Only fragments of the oldest, pre-Romanesque stone buildings, which originated in the times when the Polish state was in process of formation, have survived to the present, usually covered up by later buildings. In the Wawel castle complex in Cracow, fragments of a rotunda with four apses, built in the 10th century, have been found. Equally old are the pre-Romanesque foundations of the first cathedral in Poznań which were uncovered during the excavations after the last war, and fragments of a wall of the Benedictine cloister church at Trzemeszno and of the residences of Piast dukes at Ostrów Lednicki, Płock and Przemyśl. Portions of the Gniezno cathedral with a magnificent tiled floor date from the first years of the 11th century.

Romanesque influences began to appear in architecture as early as the mid-11th century, after the crushing of political, anti-Christian revolts and the rebuilding of the state by Casimir the Restorer. In the new capital of Cracow the first great cathedral was built on Wawel Hill and was soon afterwards rebuilt in the form of a basilica with three naves. The only part that has survived to this day is the valuable St. Leonard's Crypt. Of similar character is the monumental collegiate church at Tarnobrzeg near Łęczycza, the largest and finest of all the Ro-



manesque churches preserved in Poland. Similar sacral monuments have been preserved in several small towns such as Kruszwica, Czerwińsk, Trzemeszno, Strzelno and Opatów; but in the large and wealthy towns, the centres of authority, the churches were often rebuilt to suit the current fashion, so that only a few have preserved their original style.

At the end of the 12th century, a new influence began to make itself felt in Polish architecture, that of the Cistercians, who introduced the Gothic system, which overlapped with the traditional forms of the Romanesque basilica. A transitional style was born, of which good examples are provided by many abbeys in Poland, including those at Sulejów, Wąchock, Trzebnica and Henryków. The lively contacts maintained with the whole of Europe explain the affinities between the Cistercian (and later also the Franciscan and Dominican) churches and monasteries in Poland, and the architecture of Burgundy, Saxony, Lombardy, north Germany and Denmark.

Many excellent specimens of the Gothic style, both ecclesiastical and secular, remain in all the regions of Poland. There are, for instance, many fine brick-and-stone churches in Silesia, especially in Wrocław. From the times of Casimir the Great, i.e. from the 14th century onwards, the capital of Cracow developed spectacularly. The layout of its oldest part has not changed to this day. A Gothic basilican cathedral church was built on Wawel Hill and became the place of coronation and burial of most of the Polish kings. The magnificent church of St. Mary was built next to the Market Square; as a result of later reconstruction, it acquired its characteristic towers with differing spires. Among the best specimens of Gothic in Cracow are St. Catherine's Church, the Church of Corpus Christi, the Jagiellonian University's Collegium Maius with its fine arcaded courtyard, and the Barbican, a remnant of the town's medieval fortifications.

In the north of Poland the brick variety of Gothic prevailed. Here we should mention the churches in Gdańsk (particularly the parish Church of Our Lady, the largest church in Poland: 105 m. long, 68 m. wide, 29 m. high in the nave), Malbork, Chełmno, Elbląg, Kwidzyn, Frombork and Toruń. The splendid fortified residences of the Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order at Malbork, and of the Order's Commanders at Radzyń Chełmiński, are outstanding examples of Gothic. Gothic Toruń vies with Cracow for the title of the most beautiful Polish city. Seen from the opposite bank of the Vistula, it gives the spectator the impression of being transported into the Middle Ages. The whole Old Town complex, together with its 13th century layout, is of exceptional historical interest: the churches of St. John, St. James and the Virgin Mary, as well as the town hall (rebuilt in the 17th century

in the mannerist style) and many Gothic burgher houses (in one of which Nicolaus Copernicus was born) are among the finest examples of Gothic architecture in Poland. The early 14th century castle at Gdub (Dobrzyń) is a good instance of the defensive architecture of the time. It was rebuilt at the beginning of the 17th century at the order of Princess Anna Vasa.

The Gothic style, especially in church architecture, long resisted the Renaissance. Very notable are Gothic wooden churches, the finest of which are in the Little Poland region (Haczów, Dębno, Mogiła); they formed a very characteristic feature of the Polish landscape.

The Renaissance made a strong impact on the entire range of intellectual life in Poland. As early as c. 1500, the Royal Castle on Wawel was rebuilt in the Renaissance style. The magnificent arcaded galleries surrounding the castle courtyard and Sigismund funeral chapel, adjoining the cathedral, commemorating the last two kings of the Jagiellonian dynasty, are the work of the Italian Bartolomeo Berecci: the chapel is counted among the gems of the Renaissance style in Europe north of the Alps. The Poznań town hall with its beautiful Renaissance interior and its richly ornamented coffered ceiling also ranks very high, as well as the castle at Brzeg. Several other town halls (at Sandomierz, Chełmno, etc.) were rebuilt in the Renaissance style, together with some castles and palaces, not to mention the large covered market called the Cloth Hall in the centre of the Market Place in Cracow.

In the second half of the 16th century, the Renaissance style in Poland gradually gave way to Dutch and Italian Mannerism. Among the monuments of that period are the Great Arsenal, the Main Town Hall, the Golden Gate and the High Gate, and several burgher houses in Gdańsk — all of which have been restored with great care after the damage inflicted by the last war — the town plan and buildings of Zamosć, and the palaces at Krasiezyń, Baranów and Pieszkowa Skąta.

Lublin could boast a particularly active group of stonemasons. It is to them that we owe the splendid ornamentation of several houses in picturesque Kazimierz Dolny, certain houses and the town hall at Zamosć, and numerous 17th century churches.

The Jesuit and Cameldolite churches in Cracow are excellent examples of early Baroque. High Baroque is chiefly represented by the magnificent works of Tylman van Gameren, one of Poland's outstanding architects, of Dutch origin. His architecture was so well appreciated in Poland that the Seym ennobled him and conferred on him the surname of Gamerski. His work showed a classical tendency akin to the Baroque style of northern Europe. Among his most outstanding works are the churches of the Nuns of the Holy Sacrament and of St. Boniface in Warsaw, the palaces at Nieborów, Białystok



(rebuilt in the 18th century) and Lubartów, and particularly the Krasiński palace in Warsaw, which ranks as one of the finest examples of Baroque architecture in Poland. Of the same rank is King John Sobieski's palace at Wilanów, the work of Agostino Locci. Many magnificent edifices were built at that time in Silesia, such as the monumental Cistercian abbey at Lubiąż.

Late Baroque with Rococo ornamental influences has left many specimens of magnificent architecture. An excellent instance of the transition from Baroque to Neo-classical forms during the reign of King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski is furnished by the lovely Palace-on-the-Isle in the Warsaw's Łazienki park, the favourite summer residence of Poland's last king, who was also a prominent patron of the arts. During the Enlightenment, the Neo-classical style eclipsed Baroque traditions almost completely. At the turn of the 18th century the former dominated in various forms in all the regions of Poland. But the best examples are furnished by Warsaw (an Evangelical church, several palaces and, later, the Grand Theatre), Poznań and Puławy.

Gradually, the predilection for forms modelled on antiquity died out, while neo-Gothic came into its own. This was typical of the "mature" Romantic period and the best examples of this new style are the palaces at Opinogóra and Kórnik.

At the close of the 19th century art nouveau became the style of the day, best reflected in interior decoration; the number of buildings erected at that time has greatly diminished because of wars and demolition necessitated by town planning. Extant specimens of outstanding quality have been assigned the status of historical monuments.

### RECONSTRUCTION AND PROTECTION OF MONUMENTS

In the first post-war years, when the majority of Polish towns lay in ruins and millions of people were without a roof over their heads, the Polish government expressed the mood of the entire population when it gave top priority to the rescue of monuments of national culture. The rescue of the heritage of Poland's thousand-year-old culture was an idea which integrated the whole nation. Despite the country having been bled white, against the opinion of many foreign experts, town planners and architects that the idea of reconstructing old districts and towns should be abandoned in favour of modern construction, the majority of the most valuable historical monuments have been preserved or carefully reconstructed. The best engineers, building workers and scientists were delegated to this work. At present the rebuilding of the Warsaw Castle is under way. This is the final, symbolic act of the national effort to salvage the national heritage.

All in all, thanks to reconstruction and conservation, nine thousand buildings destroyed or heavily damaged in the last war, regained their splendour in the years 1945-70. The Old Town in Warsaw, razed to the ground by the Nazis, has been reconstructed in accordance with old plans and drawings, without the additions made in the 19th and 20th centuries. In many cases, when there were no other documents available, paintings, and especially those by Bernardo Bellotto Canaletto, were used as guides. Canaletto's series of views of Warsaw, which he painted in the mid-18th century, are distinguished by an uncanny realism.

The magnificent monuments in Gdańsk, Wrocław, Poznań and several other towns were just as faithfully reconstructed.

In the case of many castles and palaces, the former residences of great nobles, the problem consisted not only in their reconstruction but also in finding a new use for them. They have mostly been taken over by museums (see the chapter entitled Museums). Some castles and palaces, for instance at Nieborów, Radziejowice and Obozy, have been transferred to associations of artists and writers. Other historical buildings, like Baranów or Krasiczyn, are cared for by large industrial establishments. Initiatives of this kind are still being undertaken in the case of a considerable number of monuments which have been provisionally secured and are awaiting thorough renovation and new looks.

A separate and very complex question is how to salvage for future generations the best specimens of the traditional village architecture in timber. As the countryside becomes built up with brick houses, the typical old cottages, outbuildings and shrines are being dismantled and transferred to open-air ethnographical museums.

The care of monuments commemorating the struggle and martyrdom of the Polish people during the occupation constitutes a separate domain of the protection of monuments. There are thousands of such tragic memorials in Poland, among them the State Museum of Oświęcim-Brzezinka (Auschwitz-Birkenau) in memory of the four million victims murdered by the Nazis in the extermination camp.

Watching over the relics of Poland's historical heritage is the Office for Museums and Protection of Monuments in the Ministry of Culture and Art, whose director bears the title of General Conservator of Monuments. There are conservator's offices in all the voivodship capitals. Building, reconstruction and repair work is carried out by a specialized enterprise called Workshops for the Conservation of Monuments which has several provincial branches and many specialist centres. Their expert work is much praised by foreign conservators who have commissioned them to undertake many difficult tasks abroad.



## MUSEUMS

Like the architectural monuments, Polish museum collections suffered terrible losses during the last war. Many museums were burnt down and others pillaged by the enemy. Practically all the many private collections in palaces and manor houses, in the destroyed houses of Warsaw and hundreds of other towns were irretrievably lost. Altogether, ten thousand paintings by Polish artists, and 2,500 works representing various European schools had to be deleted from the records, among them such priceless masterpieces as the "Portrait of a Young Man" by Raphael; also more than 1,300 sculptures and tens of thousands of other museum pieces.

Fortunately, it has been possible to reclaim many works carried away by the Nazis, among them such masterpieces as the altarpiece from St. Mary's church in Cracow, or "The Last Judgement" by Hans Memling. After protracted negotiations, the famous Wawel tapestries and the coronation insignia returned from deposits in Canada.

The rebuilding of museums and their collections and putting their whole organization on a new footing became a task of prime importance after the war.

There are now in Poland some 350 museums of various types which come under the Minister of Culture and Art, of which 278 are directly under the Office for Museums and Protection of Monuments in the Ministry of Culture and Art.

Apart from their basic function of collecting, describing and exhibiting art objects, Polish museums engage in publishing, educational and popularizing activities, organize lectures, meetings with creative artists, literary evenings, concerts and film shows.

The richest collections are in the National Museums in Warsaw, which has several branches including the palaces of Łazienki in Warsaw, Wilanów and Nieborów. Apart from collections of Polish art,

the National Museum has galleries of ancient art, particularly Coptic and Byzantine; of exceptional beauty and value are the Faras frescoes, discovered in the Sudan by a Polish archaeological expedition led by Professor Kazimierz Michałowski.

The National Museum in Cracow (six branches) has a large gallery of 19th and 20th century Polish painting. In one of its branches, the Czartoryski Museum, there is a rich collection of foreign painting including two priceless canvases: Leonardo's "Lady with an Ermine", and Rembrandt's "Landscape with the Good Samaritan".

The Wawel State Art Collection is the most visited museum in Cracow and the whole of Poland; the number of visitors to the former royal castle exceeds one million annually. Apart from the crown treasury, a collection of arms, a painting gallery, an oriental gallery, historical interiors and royal furniture, the famous collection of 16th century tapestries — one of the largest in the world — attracts huge crowds. The main body of the tapestries is made up by the arrases woven in Brussels to the order of King Sigismund Augustus.

The National Museums in Poznań, Gdańsk, Wrocław and Szczecin, the Historical Museum in Toruń, the Świętokrzyskie Museum in Kielce and the Castle Museum at Malbork also have rich collections. Poznań, for instance, has an extremely interesting museum of musical instruments. It has an interesting collection of art nouveau in its Mazovian Museum.

There exist several kinds of historical museums: museums presenting the history of individual towns such as Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań, Gdańsk or Wrocław; museums connected with the history of the Polish revolutionary movement; museums on the sites of former concentration camps and prisons, such as Oświęcim (Auschwitz), Majdanek, Sztutowo (Stutthof), Łambinowice (Landsdorf) and Pawiak, which document Nazi crimes perpetrated on Poles and representatives of other nations. The fourth group consists of biographical museums, such as those devoted to Maria Skłodowska-Curie in Warsaw, to Nicolaus Copernicus in Frombork, to Frédéric Chopin at Żelazowa Wola, to Henryk Sienkiewicz at Chłapówek, to Stefan Żeromski and Bolesław Prus at Nałęczów, or to Jan Kochanowski at Czarnochów.

Among the most important specialized museums are: the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature, the Museum of the Polish Army, the Museum of Technology of the Chief Technical Organization, and the Museum of the Earth of the Polish Academy of Sciences (all in Warsaw). Some of those specialized museums are of particular interest being rare examples of their kind or even unique in the world. Worth mentioning here is the underground museum of salt mining at Wieliczka near Cracow, located in a mine which began operation almost one

## MUSIC

thousand years ago; the Poster Museum at Wilanów, and the collection of coaches and carriages at the Museum of Łazienki. The branch of the Warsaw State Archaeological Museum at Biskupin is quite striking for it consists of a prehistoric settlement two-and-half-thousand years old. Another highly interesting open-air museum is the Archaeological Reserve at Krzemionki Opatowskie, a Neolithic quarry dating from circa 2500 B.C.

Some thirty years ago a small book appeared in Cracow written by Henryk Reiss, a professor at the Jagiellonian University, provocatively entitled *Polish Music is the Most Beautiful of All*. This title soon became the subject of malicious jokes. Reiss was accused of boundless foolishness and a complete lack of critical judgement.

Today, such a title would not shock anybody. For quite some time Poles have been the mainspring of contemporary world music. But it should be added that even at the time Reiss's opinion did not deserve the ridicule it received, Poland had fine musical traditions. The trouble was that at the time the Cracow professor wrote his apologetic little book, only a few connoisseurs had heard about old Polish music.

### MUSICA ANTIQUA POLONICA

The methodical research conducted by Polish musicologists brings fresh discoveries every year. Today, we have specimens of Polish music dating back to the 12th century, which have been found in archives and old libraries.

Little is known about Mikolaj of Radom, the first Polish composer known by name, who lived at the beginning of the 15th century, apart from the fact that he composed several exquisite pieces, both secular and ecclesiastical, including a three-voice hymn, for two instruments and voice, the text of which told about certain events at the court of King Ladislaus Jagiello.

In the 16th and 17th centuries music in Poland was in a way behind that of the most renowned centres of music in Europe. During the Renaissance, in the 16th century, Mikolaj of Cracow wrote beautiful liturgical music as well as dance songs, and also preludes for instruments; most of his compositions have been preserved only in transcription for organ, without the words.



Much more sophisticated is the work of Wacław of Szamotuły, court musician to King Sigismund Augustus, who employed polyphony with a freedom remarkable for his time. He gained European fame, his compositions were published in Germany and the Netherlands. No less talented was Marcin of Lvov while Mikołaj Gomółka, whose work was of similar excellence, wrote four-voice music to the psalms by the great poet Jan Kochanowski: Melodies for the Polish Psalter.

A composer active at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, the age of Baroque, was Mikołaj Zielencki. His works, both for choir and instruments, are so fine that he is considered one of the best European composers of his time. Another outstanding composer was Adam Jastrzębski who studied in Germany and Italy. Besides his musical successes he was also considered a good architect, if a poor verse writer.

Marcin Mielczewski, the third of the Baroque masters of music, had an excellent knowledge of musical techniques but too often made his own work easy by imitating Italian masters. Other Baroque masters were, Bartłomiej Pękiel — author of *Dulcis amor*, a magnificent concerto for voices and instruments, and several fine masses — Stanisław Sylwester Szarzyński, and Grzegorz Gerwazy Gorczycki.

The 18th century saw no great talents worth mentioning, particularly in view of the splendid development of European music: this was after all the age of Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven.

#### FROM CHOPIN TO SZYMANOWSKI

"Hats off, gentlemen, here's a genius," wrote Robert Schumann, when he first heard Chopin's music.

So much has been written about Frédéric Chopin, about every one of his nocturnes, mazurkas, or polonaises that it would be absurd to try and compress a description of his work into one or two pages. He has created a music which to this day evokes delight in every continent, which has won millions of admirers in each successive generation, which has proved resistant to all transient fashions. Chopin was a unique phenomenon in world music: his work, though drawing on that of many of the most outstanding composers, is so original, so personal that no one has even tried to imitate him. He has remained unique although many have made use of his musical ideas, have profited from the crumbs of his extraordinary creative inventiveness, among them were impressionists and expressionists, avant-garde composers, and even jazzmen.

He is a chapter unto himself in the history of world music, although his work is a quintessence of the Polish character, a kind of wondrous

fusion of the popular rhythms and melodies which he heard in his childhood and which were woven into his refined, elegant and exquisite compositions up until the end of his life.

After Chopin it became rather difficult for other Polish composers to win fame for they were always compared to the Master beside whom their own gifts seemed pale by comparison. Such was the fate of Stanisław Moniuszko, the father of Polish opera, a prolific composer (he wrote 240 fine songs apart from operas) who rendered great services in spreading musical appreciation in Poland, and was extremely popular. Not in listing all his merits and achievements people would always add regretfully that as regards the scope of his talent and imaginative power he was not the equal of Chopin. This is true. But strangely enough, he was much better appreciated by foreigners, for example his contemporary Hans Bülow, a famous German composer. In spite of the criticism with which Poles have treated, and continue to treat, Moniuszko's work, some of his operas, especially *Halka* and *The Hunted Man* are stock items in the repertory of Polish operas and are often performed with success abroad.

Other excellent composers also deserve more appreciation than they received, such as Władysław Żeleński, who continued the Moniuszko tradition; or the three composers from the famous Wieniawski family of musicians: Adam, Józef and the best known of them all, Henryk; or Ignacy Paderewski, a virtuoso of international fame (and an ambassador though hardly very fortunate politician). For many years Paderewski was considered the most outstanding pianist in the world, but his compositions have passed almost unnoticed, although his opera *Monna, in addition to some other works, is of great artistic value. Neither did Mieczysław Karłowicz manage to break through the "Chopin barrier", although his symphonic poems, especially *The Immemorial Songs* and *Lithuanian Rhapsody* can doubtless be classed among outstanding works of Polish and European music.*

At the beginning of the present century a composer emerged in Poland who created such innovative music that any comparisons with Chopin became meaningless: he was Karol Szymanowski. He began to write music in the neo-Romantic style, was not indifferent to impressionism and expressionism, and ended with his own original "national style" inspired by elements of Poland's rich folklore, conveyed through the most avant-garde means of expression. His oratorium *Sabat Mater*, the opera *King Roger*, the ballet *Herrnasie*, together with his violin concertos, put Szymanowski on a par with the best composers in the world.

## THE "POLISH SCHOOL" IN MUSIC

Szymanowski was the first of a line of Polish composers who aspired to the highest positions in the world of music. The most successful among them have been Witold Lutosławski and Krzysztof Penderecki, but there have been quite a number of other composers who are perhaps less well-known but yield little to the former in class and artistic inventiveness.

There was a time when Witold Lutosławski was an outstanding exponent of Neo-classicism. After 1945, he turned towards folklore sources. His *Concerto for orchestra* is included in the repertoires of all the famous symphony orchestras, but that period in his creativeness, inspired by Szymanowski and Bartók, is now a thing of the past. Beginning with his *Musique Funèbre* and *Jour Venitiens* Lutosławski has worked out an individual method of controlled aleatorism; he has obtained extremely refined sound effects and succeeded in creating a variety of tensions in the listeners as they await the fundamental ideas and motifs of the composition. Many of the most famous music academies in the world have honoured Lutosławski with titles and awards as a "modern classic" who has refreshed and raised to new heights the form of the grand symphony.

Krzysztof Penderecki, twenty years his junior, has stormed the heights of fame to become the most fashionable composer in the world, which, of course, in no way detracts from the mastery of his works. Penderecki has never been much interested in such powerful trends in modern music as dodecaphony or aleatorism, yet he has himself destroyed the ruling tonal system by introducing clusters of sound into his compositions and using entirely new instrumental effects. Penderecki's innovations are especially noticeable in his quest for a new colour of tone. Another feature characteristic of his work is his great sensitiveness to tradition. Penderecki often seeks out famous literary texts and builds his oratoria on them, which though startling yet are intelligible to the audience. His best compositions: *Threnody in Memory of the Victims of Hiroshima*, *Anticlimax*, *The Passion According to St. Luke*, *Dies irae*, the opera *The Devils of Loudun*, and especially *Motets*, attract large crowds wherever they are performed.

Tadeusz Baird, the third of the composers most famous at home and abroad, stands somewhat apart because while using the most avant-garde techniques he has remained lyrical, melodious and very "Slav" in the mood of his compositions. His *Four Essays for Orchestra*, a work valued in the world on a par with the best pieces written by Lutosławski and Penderecki, is a peculiar counterpoint to the extreme avant-garde searchings for new sounds; his masterly *Third Symphony* has

another recognition. Baird is at the peak of his development, contently surprising audiences with new, very different musical means, but at the same time remaining faithful to his specific romantic understanding of the function and meaning of music.

Henryk Górecki is a composer of quite a different stamp and very typical of the "Polish school". In his search after the origins of sound, he mentally violating the conventions to which the human ear has become accustomed, in his unceremonious treatment of musical instruments, he has gone even further than Penderecki. Yet his dynamic and expressive works, usually short or even very short, have won great veneration despite their strangeness. Great popularity has been won in particular by his *Little Music*, the series *Genesis*, *Ad Matrem* and the *Capricornian Symphony*.

Kazimierz Serocki has made himself known as a bold experimenter, especially in aleatory piano composition in which he leaves much freedom of interpretation to the player. He is also a subtle colourist in vocal pieces written to the words of outstanding poets, and the author of spectacularly skilful large compositions such as *Symphonic Fragments*.

These five composers are only a sample of the most eminent representatives of the "Polish school" in music. Another was the late Grażyna Bacewicz, who before her premature death was also an outstanding violinist. Yet others are Włodzimierz Kotoński, Tomasz Sikorski, Zygmunt Krauze, Wojciech Kilar, Zbigniew Rudziński, Augustyn Bloch, Krzysztof Meyer and Romuald Twardowski. Each represents a different kind of talent, a different temperament; all are linked by their passion to look for new means of musical expression.

A separate mention is due to Bogusław Schöffler who is not only a well-known composer but also an outstanding theoretician of the Polish avant-garde, its spiritual leader, so to speak. His authority as a researcher into modern trends and an inspirer of musical thinking is unquestioned throughout the world.

## PHILHARMONIC SOCIETIES, ORCHESTRAS, OPERAS

There are many musical institutions and organizations in Poland which promote music and musical appreciation. There are 17 philharmonic societies, two state symphony orchestras, nine operatic theatres, nine operettas, two professional song and dance ensembles (Mławsze and Śląsk), one dance theatre and 18 voivodship entertainment enterprises.

All these artistic bodies are state enterprises, financed from the voivodship budgets. There are also the Polish Radio and Television



orchestras and choirs, of which the Polish Radio and Television Grand Symphony Orchestra in Katowice is considered second only in Poland to the orchestra of the National Philharmonic Society.

The National Philharmonic Society in Warsaw has not only a symphony orchestra ranking among the best in Europe but also a large choir, a chamber orchestra and a group which specializes in old Polish music. Considerable standing is also enjoyed by the Philharmonic Societies of Cracow, Silesia, Łódź, Poznań, Wrocław and Bydgoszcz; the latter possesses a concert hall of the highest acoustic standard.

In the field of opera, pride of place is taken by Warsaw's Grand Theatre of Opera and Ballet, but the competition offered by the operas in Łódź, Poznań or Bytom are not to be dismissed lightly. Warsaw has also a very interesting Chamber Opera.

The Mazowsze and Śląsk state song and dance ensembles have visited scores of countries on all continents and won immense popularity for Polish dances, songs and folk costumes as well.

The renown won by the Polish symphony orchestras and opera companies is chiefly a question of the qualities of their conductors. Many of them, such as Henryk Czyż, Kazimierz Kord, Jan Krenz, Witold Rowicki, Jerzy Semkow, Stanisław Skrowaczewski, Stanisław Wisłocki and Bohdan Wodiczko, have won great successes with the most sophisticated audiences in the world when conducting Polish orchestras or during guest performances abroad.

Among soloists, the name of Konstanty Kulka, a violinist of the highest world class, springs first to mind; he seems to confirm the old opinion that the violin best expresses the "song of the Polish soul". Wanda Wiłkomirska is another extremely popular violinist. Among the pianists, the most famous is Piotr Paleczny while the ladies are represented by Halina Czerny-Stefańska, Lidia Grychtolówna, Barbara Hesse-Bukowska and Regina Smendzińska. The best singers are Elżbieta Koszut-Okrutka, Halina Łukomska, Stefania Woytowicz, Teresa Wojtaszek-Kubiak, Teresa Żylis-Gara, Andrzej Hiojski, Bernard Ładysz and Wiesław Ochman.

## FESTIVALS AND MUSIC COMPETITIONS

It would be impossible to mention them all, there are so many of them; several score annually. We shall limit ourselves to the most important.

Every five years competitions are held in Poland which are highly regarded in the world of music: the Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw and the Wieniawski International Violin Competition

in Poznań. Experience shows that the prizewinners in those competitions succeed rapidly to join the world's highest ranking musicians.

Among the international festivals which constitute a survey of the achievements in various kinds of music, the one valued most highly is the event known as Warsaw Autumn, devoted to contemporary avant garde music. As a rule, Polish composers take the lead in this festival, which is the logical consequence of the balance of forces in the domain.

Wielkopolska Cantans, the oratorio and cantata festival in Wrocław, has won general recognition in the world; it is attended by orchestras and choirs, as well as vocal and instrumental soloists. The organizers concern themselves not only with the quality of the programme but also with the setting: the concerts are usually held in the exalted atmosphere of one of Wrocław's fine Gothic churches.

As many as three festivals are dedicated to organ music, which seems to be experiencing a revival: one is held in Cracow in the early spring, another in Oliva in the summer, where the Cathedral houses the most famous organ in Poland and one of the largest in Europe, and the third at Kamień Pomorski (also in a Gothic cathedral); the latter festival includes chamber music. Organ recitals are also on the programme during the Days of Chamber Music at Łańcut and Leżajsk.

The Łódź Ballet Encounters are an occasion for the confrontation of Polish and foreign ballet companies. The best Polish and foreign troupes meet at Międzyzdroje, during the Festival of Choral Songs. Ziemomir Góra plays host to the International Festival of Song and Dance Ensembles, which presents stylized versions of the folklore of different peoples, and Zakopane to the International Festival of Highland Folklore. The International Music Festival in Bydgoszcz is devoted to old music of eastern and central Europe.

Then, there is the Jazz Jamboree held in Warsaw in the autumn, an event which is highly thought of by jazz lovers and attracts outstanding groups from all over the world.

Apart from those festivals which provide occasions for international encounters, reviews and confrontations, there is a large number of similar events at national level, most of which are attended by performers from other countries. Among them are: Poznań Music Spring devoted primarily to the works of young composers, the Wrocław Festival of Polish Contemporary Music (every two years), the Festival of Polish Piano Music at Słupsk, the Festival of Polish Violin Music at Częstochowa, the Festival of Music and Poetry at Białystok, the festival known as Jazz on the Odra at Wrocław, etc. A separate category is made up of festivals which are to enhance the attractiveness of well-known health and holiday resorts, such as the Chopin Festival

at Duszyniki, the Moniuszko Festival at Kudowa, the festivals of Russian and Soviet music at Łądek-Zdrój, of arias and songs at Krynica and the Wieniawski Days at Szczawno.

### WINNING AUDIENCES

Extending the appreciation of music among the public, increasing the number of music lovers, is one of the main principles of Polish cultural policy. This goal is served by a network of music centres, the low cost of tickets, and also by the organization of many attractive festivals and competitions which, as experience shows, are an excellent means of popularizing music and arousing the interest of those groups of people who are not in the habit of attending concerts regularly.

This musical offensive is not limited to such methods of gaining listeners. Many symphony orchestras and operatic and operetta companies tour the country; in this way artists reach even small villages and new industrial estates. Equal efforts are made to apply the reverse method of bringing music lovers from the countryside and small towns to the big centres with symphony orchestras and concert halls. Free matinees are organized for school children with a programme adapted to the tastes and receptiveness of the youngest audiences. Many workplaces conclude special contracts with particular theatres which look after the cultural requirements of the worker public, drawing up a programme of musical events of varying standards of difficulty. Also very popular are the shows organized in summer for the general public in the courtyards of old castles, in amphitheatres or on medieval fortified walls.

Events which popularize music are also conducted by numerous associations of music lovers, and by public organizations of a national or local character.

Finally, here are some eloquent figures: in 1972, audiences comprising nearly five million people attended concerts organized by philharmonic societies and symphony orchestras, more than 1.5 million went to the opera, over two million watched operettas and the Śląsk and Mazowiec ensembles, while the number of spectators at events organized by the Estrada entertainment enterprise which mainly presents lighter forms of music, exceeded 15 million!

### LIGHT MUSIC

Songs are just as popular in Poland as they are throughout the world. Perhaps even more so. In the summer, between the Festival of Polish Songs at Opole and the International Song Festival at Sopot,

the discussions about the type and form of Polish songs, what they are and what they should be, take up a good deal of space in the columns of even serious socio-cultural journals.

The rise in the popularity of songs began only at the close of the fifties. It was due on the one hand to a number of excellent student journals and variety theatres, which flourished at the time and which presented ambitious literary, satirical, witty or lyrical songs; on the other, to the impact of western music: various styles of jazz, especially pop music, which in Poland has been named big-beat. Later, by the mid-sixties, songs based on Polish folklore motifs but in modern arrangement and rhythm became the fashion. Just now, all these styles meet and vie with one another. Both songs of the French type in which the words are important, and the rhythmic pop songs inspired by famous British groups are very popular; on the other hand, Italian type songs based on *bel canto* have completely failed to win popularity in Poland.

In talking about Polish song writers two names in particular should be mentioned: Agnieszka Osiecka and Wojciech Młynarski. Osiecka writes poetic songs of a very high literary standard which are at the same time extremely well received by the general public; she is at her best in a witty and lyrical genre, with a tendency towards the grotesque. Młynarski excels in satirical songs with social overtones or in parodies. Both began their careers in amateur student groups and, after having won successes on variety stages, now often compose whole shows of the music-hall type or the so-called "theatre of song".

Among performers, Ewa Demarczyk constitutes a class in herself; her repertoire is ambitious, difficult and worthy of concert stages rather than variety shows. Somewhat similar ambitions are entertained by Czesław Niemen, once the idol of the youthful public, a singer of quite exceptional force of expression; for some time now his repertoire has usually consisted of poetic texts juxtaposed with modern jazz or other avant-garde music genres.

Among many talented vocalists the most interesting are Maryja Rodowicz, Stan Borys, Jerzy Połomski and Marek Grechuta. Also some groups, which often successfully perform abroad, such as the Skalds or "U-1", enjoy great popularity.

Polish jazz, especially the modern kind which has completely broken away from the New Orleans traditions and syncopated rhythm, is well known abroad. In this domain the vocal group called the Novi Singers, who sing without lyrics and treat the voice exclusively as a musical instrument, is a particularly interesting phenomenon.



## THEATRE

### TRADITIONS

The origins of the Polish theatre go back to the Middle Ages. From those times have survived fragments of sacred dialogues that were presented in the way of religious instruction, as well as the integral text of the passion play, *The History of Our Lord's Glorious Resurrection*, a work full of charm and unintentional humour.

The great writers of the Renaissance era, Mikołaj Rej and Jan Kochanowski, wrote dramatic works (see Chapter on Literature). Kochanowski's *The Dismissal of the Greek Envoys* marked the beginning of political theatre which won — and has retained — particular popularity in Poland.

In the 17th century, two Polish kings, Ladislaus IV and his brother John Casimir, were great lovers of the drama. The former liked opera in particular and brought to Warsaw Italian singers (who performed in a specially adapted room of Warsaw castle); the latter, who had spent many years in France, favoured the drama. It was under John Casimir's reign that *Le Cid* was produced in Poland for the first time in 1662.

The performances of strolling players also enjoyed much success in Poland. Among the preserved works of this kind, the best known is Piotr Baryka's *The Peasant-King*.

The second half of the 17th and the first half of the 18th century, a period of ill-fated wars and a certain stagnation in cultural life, also saw a decline in the theatre. A revival did not come until the reign of Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, a noted patron of the arts; the credit for this belonged chiefly to Wojciech Bogusławski, a talented actor, director, entrepreneur and playwright, justly known as "the Father of the Polish Stage".

Bogusławski founded the professional National Theatre and rallied around it a whole pleiad of talented artists, chiefly playwrights like Franciszek Zabłocki, Franciszek Bohomolec, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz,

Zabłocki's *The Dandy's Courtship*. Niemcewicz's *The Envoy's Return*, plays written by Bogusławski himself: *Cracovians and Mountaineers* and *Henry VI at the Chase*, are still produced nowadays by many theatres in Poland.

In the partition period, theatre — especially in Warsaw and in Cracow — played an important role as a centre of national culture. On the stage the Polish language, ousted from official use and gradually forced out from schools, was to be heard. Actors of great talent appeared: towards the end of the 19th century, a star of the first magnitude among them was Helena Modrzejewska (Modjeska) who, after triumphs in Cracow, Lvov and Warsaw, won world fame on the other side of the Atlantic as an unequalled performer of Shakespearean roles.

The great dramas by the Polish romantic poets — *Forefathers' Eve* by Adam Mickiewicz, *Kordian* by Juliusz Słowacki, *The Undivine Comedy* by Zygmunt Krasiński — did not at that time reach the stage. The censorship tolerated at the most comedies, a master of which was Alexander Fredro, who combined an excellent knowledge of Polish customs with French subtlety and taste. *The Revenge*, *Maidens' Vows*, *Pan Jodłowski* and other plays by this prolific writer are still amusing Polish theatregoers.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the theatre attained very high standards in Cracow, political conditions there being much more liberal than in the other parts of the country under Russian and Prussian rule. At that time the great dramatist Stanisław Wyspiański laid the first time Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve* as well as several plays of his own. Some of those and, in particular, *The Wedding and Liberation* have remained to the present day among the most outstanding and, at the same time, the most controversial of Polish dramatic works and have been interpreted anew by each successive generation.

Węgrbiński's plays are a remarkably successful blend of the great traditions of Polish Romanticism and the naive folk art of the Nativity play kind of poetry and satire, of mysticism and topical political journalism.

In the 1920s and 30s, it was in Warsaw that theatrical life was most animated. A whole galaxy of distinguished directors and actors appeared, and each of them created a style of his own in staging or acting. Among directors Leon Schiller, the creator of monumental theatre, and Juliusz Osterwa, a representative of the sublimated psychological theatre, stood out in particular. Osterwa was at the same time an excellent actor, competing for the palm with Stefan Jaracz, Józef Węgrzyn, Aleksander Zelwerowicz, Kazimierz Junosza-Stepowski and Jerzy Leszczyński. Parts created by each of these masters have become legendary in the Polish theatre.

Oddly enough, Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, a playwright recognized today as a harbinger of Beckett's and Ionesco's modern theatre of the absurd, did not win popularity before the war and remained almost unnoticed. Witkiewicz was a man ahead of his time, and it is only today that his grotesque and tragic works are achieving triumphs on the stage and being discovered by researchers into theatrical history.

### THE PLACE OF THE POLISH THEATRE IN WORLD DRAMA

In the past decade or so, the Polish theatre has attained a standard enabling it to be reckoned among the best in the world. Such a judgement is justified by the creative, innovative achievements of Polish directors and stage-designers, the wealth and diversity of the repertoire of Polish theatres and the virtuosity of Poland's leading actors. The record of modern playwrighting is less impressive; however, in this field, too, a few authors have won high international reputation.

Several elements have contributed to the successes of the contemporary Polish theatre. First, there is the continuation of those traditions of acting virtuosity and boldness of production which were marked in Poland even before the war. Secondly, there is the State patronage of culture; the threat of unprofitableness which in many countries limits the artistic initiative of theatres and forces them out of box-office considerations to stage trivial productions, is absent in Poland. Thirdly, very close ties are maintained with world drama, while at the same time, giving priority to the Polish repertoire, both classical and modern. Fourthly, there is the rich leaven of dramatic criticism which appears both in specialized and general periodicals. Last but not least there is the constant flow of talented actors, directors, stage designers, not only from the drama schools and art colleges but also from amateur companies, which in Poland are very numerous and interesting and, in particular, from the student drama groups which have won world-wide admiration.

One should also add that the theatre in Poland has to face sophisticated audiences for whom mere competence is not enough.

### FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT THE THEATRE

There are in Poland 51 theatres (not counting 25 puppet theatres) which possess a total of 74 stages. Warsaw with its 17 theatres is the greatest centre of theatrical life. Cracow has 8 theatres and Wrocław has 6.

Many theatres, in addition to their normal repertoire, also run road companies that reach small towns, industrial estates and villages. In 1972, Poland's theatres gave a total of 19,515 performances which were seen by 7.4 million people.

Theatres in Poland are state-owned. They all receive subsidies from the State budget. The State pays an additional 42 zlotys per spectator, much more than the average price of a theatre ticket.

As regards organization, theatres are subordinated to the voivodship offices, but the directors (who frequently perform at the same time the function of artistic managers) have the decisive say in matters of personnel and repertoire.

### OUTSTANDING THEATRES

This is what the American weekly magazine *Newsweek* wrote about Józef Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre: "The world's most famous avant garde theatre (...) has influenced almost every major theatrical company in the world (...). A theatre of such purity and intensity has never before been seen in this country".

This opinion was not an exception. Similar views on Grotowski's theatre have been voiced by critics in all countries visited by the legendary company from Wrocław. Their work has been compared to the reforming achievements of Stanislavsky and Meyerhold.

Grotowski creates a "poor" theatre, abandoning scenery, costumes, musical arrangement, light effects, even the stage. The sole material for Grotowski's mystery plays — this term renders more adequately the character of his productions than "performance" — is the actor, his body and his voice.

The work that in a normal theatre is called rehearsing, should rather be called training in Grotowski's company; it is conducted with extreme, exhausting intensity — Hindu, Chinese and Japanese methods are used in order to achieve the maximum psychological expressiveness on the part of the actor. The results of this self-perfection, which is not to be found in any other company in the world, have a jolting effect on the audience.

Also in Wrocław is another untypical company, enjoying only slightly lesser renown than Grotowski's: Henryk Tomaszewski's Mime Theatre. Although not a single word is spoken, it is a theatre in the fullest sense of the term — one that has worked out its own means of expression, entirely different from those of other mime companies. "The performances of the Polish theatre from Wrocław", the German newspaper *Westfalen Blatt* wrote, "constitute an artistic event, in which folklore is combined with surrealism, the eternal expression of



gesture and rhythm with the beauty of spectacle, pantomime with modern characterized dance and acrobatics".

The outstanding innovatory achievements of the famous experimental theatres spring naturally from the fertile soil of Poland's theatrical life as a whole, with its climate of constant artistic search. The so-called theatre of the boulevards is practically nonexistent in Poland; almost all theatres strive to find new means of expression and a style of their own in order to assault the imagination of the audience. Obviously such attempts are not always successful; yet, it has happened more than once over the past few years that theatres in such provincial towns as Kalisz or Koszalin have presented productions in no way inferior as regards artistic merit to the most renowned theatres of Warsaw or Cracow. Poland's leading theatres today include the Stary (Old) Theatre in Cracow, the Narodowy (National), Współczesny (Contemporary), Dramatyczny (Dramatic), Ateneum and Studio Theatres in Warsaw, the Wybrzeże (Coast) Theatre in Gdańsk and the Polski (Polish) Theatre in Wrocław.

#### THE TEATR STARY (OLD THEATRE)

This is indeed the oldest of Cracow's theatres, having been established in the last year of the 18th century. It has always been one of Poland's best theatres, realizing an ambitious repertoire and presenting a realistic style of acting, (the so-called Cracow school of acting). The repertoire has always been subordinated to this principle, on the basis of which the Old Theatre has always invited the most ambitious directors for guest work. Thus in recent years its collaborators have included Andrzej Wajda — Poland's most distinguished film director — Konrad Swinarski and Jerzy Jaroński. Swinarski, a pupil of Brecht, has created a theatre of epic, and at the same time highly innovatory, type; in his productions, one can detect the influence of his master and of the Soviet avant-garde of the 1920s — yet it is by no means imitation. Swinarski stresses in a fully conscious way the conventional theatricalness of his productions, he breaks the illusion of reality, distances his audience from the performance and thereby induces them to take up a position with regard to the events and problems presented on the stage. It is an approach altogether opposed to that of, for example, Grotowski, who draws the public into experiencing the performance together with the actors and strives to eliminate the sense of division between stage and audience. *Forefathers' Eve*, staged by Swinarski in 1973, was the most important event of that year's theatrical season in Poland. Jerzy Jaroński who in the past few years has become the most distinguished director of contemporary Polish plays (he specializes in the difficult works of

Andrzej Króiewicz), attaches particular attention to the understanding of the author's text and implied meaning and to giving them an expressive and precise dramatic form.

#### THE TEATR NARODOWY (NATIONAL THEATRE)

Poland's oldest theatre, which in 1964 celebrated its 200th anniversary, remains faithful to the idea of "monumental theatre", making use not only of the spoken word but also of a rich and impressive range of light effects, music and dance; it thus combines all the media that stimulate the imagination of the audience. This has been the approach of both Kazimierz Dejmek, previous director of the National Theatre, and of Adam Hanuszkiewicz, its present director. These two distinguished directors differ, however, as regards their personal literary passions. Dejmek has a particular taste for the popular, fiction current in culture; his is the credit for rediscovering for the Polish theatre the forgotten works of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; the minstrels' comedy and the goliards' theatre. Thanks to him, texts which had lain buried in dust-covered manuscripts, became an integral part of the Polish cultural tradition. Hanuszkiewicz, on the other hand, gives priority to the great romantic poets and to productions based on adaptations of texts of the highest literary merit but not intended for the stage. Hanuszkiewicz successfully ran for many years the Television Theatre; he transferred very skillfully the experience gained in television work to the "legitimate" theatre, making neat use of abridgements and editing, framing scenes with spotlights as is done before the cameras. This method is well suited to the realization of Hanuszkiewicz's artistic concepts; even when staging the best known works, consecrated by years of tradition, he shortens them without ceremony and re-composes them arbitrarily, extracting from them only those threads that have most topicality for modern audiences, which stimulate their thoughts and, above all, their emotions.

#### THE TEATR WSPÓŁCZESNY (CONTEMPORARY THEATRE)

Quite different is the approach of Erwin Axer who for the past 20 years has headed the Teatr Współczesny. There the greatest importance is attached to a careful rendition of the text and to bringing out the maximum content from the dialogue. Thus, it is neither a "poor" theatre like that of Grotowski, or "rich" like that of Hanuszkiewicz — but simply a mature realistic theatre; moderately modern, moderately traditional, always directed with the greatest care. It is a thinking theatre, provoking the audience to pose questions and reflect on the human

condition. The company of excellent actors can cope equally well with the requirements of classical and avant-garde repertoire, they feel equally at ease in drama, comedy and "theatre of the absurd". The Teatr Współczesny has presented to the Polish public many works by Brecht, Frisch, Beckett, Ionesco, Pinter, Albee, and other outstanding playwrights of the 20th century. It was this theatre, too, that first produced Mrożek's famous *Tango*.

#### THE TEATR DRAMATYCZNY (DRAMATIC THEATRE)

This theatre won a name for itself at the beginning of the sixties thanks largely to the discovery of Brecht and Dürrenmatt by Polish audiences with whom he is perhaps no less popular than in his native Switzerland. Almost every year the Teatr Dramatyczny would put on one of his plays which would run for months at a time.

The selection policy of the Teatr Dramatyczny is similar to that of the Współczesny. Both theatres have their fanatical devotees and both have excellent actors.

#### THE TEATR STUDIO (STUDIO THEATRE) AND OTHERS

This theatre has existed for only a few years but, due to the personality of its director, Józef Szajna, it promptly earned a place in the front rank. Szajna, a plastic artist, made a reputation for himself as a stage designer and finally took up directing with great success. Some people say that Szajna's productions are "organized happenings"; others — on the contrary — stress the construction of his performances, which is thought out to the last detail; the director's uncanny artistic visions, often emphasizing ugliness, serve to bring into relief the text. Although departing altogether from the traditional convention of the stage (or, maybe, just for this reason), the Teatr Studio has won immense popularity, above all among young people. The atmosphere of its productions is reminiscent of a séance, yet at the same time — quite unaccountably — they remain faithful to the authors' ideas. Even when it comes to ordinary realistic repertoire, Szajna manages to transform it into a fantastic — and fascinating — production.

Among the other Warsaw theatres, the Ateneum also enjoys great success and an excellent reputation; similar to the Współczesny in approach and aspirations, the Ateneum is not inferior to it in many productions and in the past few seasons can even be considered superior. The Polski (Polish) theatre, having achieved great things in the past, is today regaining its former position after long years of stagnation. A very successful novelty is the Mały (Little) Theatre, which is

so much of the National Theatre. The famous STS (Student Satirical Theatre) which for many years played the role of a platform for political discussion, has been transformed — under its old name — into a professional theatre; this promotion has unfortunately reduced the reputation to "change the world", which formerly characterized this talented and creative company.

#### THE TEATR WYBRZEŻE (COAST THEATRE)

As the only dramatic theatre in the "Tri-city" (the Gdynia, Sopot and Gdansk conurbation), the Teatr Wybrzeże has a particularly difficult task because it has to cater for very varied audiences. In spite of this, the Teatr Wybrzeże is still one of the best theatres in Poland; its plays, both foreign and Polish, are always produced there with great care and inventiveness, and in the choice of contemporary repertoire, the Teatr Wybrzeże does not imitate Warsaw but strikes out on its own and the results are often sensational. Several productions of this theatre, e.g. the Polish adaptation of James Joyce's famous *Finnegans*, have won high praise abroad.

#### PERSONALITIES OF THE POLISH THEATRE

In giving a brief description of a few leading theatres, we have already mentioned the names of directors connected with them. This, however, by no means exhausts the list — even if we were to limit ourselves to the most distinguished.

Erwina Skuszancka, together with her husband Jerzy Krasowski, earned a unique artistic success by organizing and running the Ludowy (People's) Theatre in Nowa Huta, in a working-class milieu to which theatre had previously been only a word; the overwhelming majority of these workers were newcomers from rural areas. The road Skuszancka chose to take was seemingly hopeless: she gave her theatre an avant-garde character, adventurous and ambitious. In defiance of all predictions, it was just such a theatre that met with excellent response on the part of the working-class audience, who recognized it as "theirs" and, in spite of its demanding repertoire, it enjoyed very high attendance.

Each director represents a specific style. Lidia Zamkow's productions have an expressionistic, almost cruel character. Ludwik René specializes in beautiful stage settings. Jerzy Kreczmar has a particular flair for the "theatre of the absurd". Then, there are the young directors, none the less already counted among the best: Maciej Prus, Henryk Grynajewski, Roman Kordziński, Izabela Cywińska. Finally, there



is a large group of excellent actors who have also enjoyed great success in directing: Gustaw Holoubek, Jan Świdorski, Tadeusz Łomnicki, Andrzej Łapicki, Wojciech Siemion.

As for actors, they were never lacking in Poland, and today too there are many outstanding personalities among them. To those already mentioned, one may add the names of Ignacy Gogolewski, Kazimierz Opaliński, Zbigniew Zapasiewicz, Mariusz Dmochowski, Marek Walczewski, Irena Eichler, Halina Mikołajska, Zofia Rysiówna, Aleksandra Ślaska, Barbara Krafftówna, Zofia Mrozowska, Zofia Kucówna, Halina Wińska and, representing the younger generation, Marta Lipińska, Anna Polony, Teresa Budzisz-Krzyżanowska, Jan Nowicki, Wojciech Pszoniak and Andrzej Seweryn.

The past few years have brought two new discoveries. Daniel Olbrychski was made famous by his excellent roles in Wajda's films but hardly anyone expected him to repeat his success on the stage. Yet he played Hamlet at the Teatr Narodowy with such irresistible force of talent as perhaps no one in Poland before him. Maja Komorowska had been known in Wrocław a few years ago but outside of that city few theatregoers had heard about her; today, while still only on the threshold of her stage career, she is decidedly coming to the fore among Polish actresses, due to the maturity and original style of her acting.

Along with directors and actors, the third great asset of the Polish theatre — the greatest, according to many experts — is stage design. Even in the inter-war period, the stage sets of the theatres of Cracow and Warsaw enjoyed well-deserved fame, for example those designed by Karol Frycz, rendering to perfection the style of the epoch of the given play; the imaginative fairy-tale designs of Wincenty Drabik, the austere and unreal designs of Andrzej Pronaszko or the light, smart and colourful sets by Władysław Dąbrowski. The tradition begun by Frycz was continued by the excellent stylist Jan Kosiński; his stage designs, rich in colour and composed in a masterly manner, had the quality of bringing out the atmosphere of each production with unerring accuracy.

Pronaszko's visions have impregnated the work of the above-mentioned Józef Szajna who professes a programme of anti-aestheticism, de-composition and destruction of the "theatricalness" of a theatre performance and, above all, Tadeusz Kantor (Cricot II theatre) who was fascinated successively by tachisme, informelle, geometric abstractionism and pop-art; Kantor introduced to the Polish stage the newest artistic currents without, however, sticking slavishly to borrowed models.

Quite a different road was chosen by Adam Kilian and the late Andrzej Stopka who drew upon folk art, above all the folk art of

the mountain region. Their attitude towards this material is not the same, however: Stopka freely transformed folk motifs which served him solely as a source of creative inspiration; Kilian gives a conscious imitation of these motifs, retaining and emphasizing their naïve nature.

A typical "painter's" approach to stage design, developing the style of Brecht, is especially characteristic of the work of Kazimierz Wiśniak, Andrzej Pakiiewicz and Andrzej Majewski. The past few years have revealed a surprising number of stage-designing talents among women. Anna Zamojska is the head stage-designer of Polish Television, Ewa Wierchowicz created a total structure that, with minor alterations, can be used for all of Shakespeare's plays; Krystyna Zachwatowicz has become famous for her designs tending to surrealism; Ewa Starowieyska distinguished herself by her perfect understanding of the author's and director's intentions.

Several Polish stage designers have achieved such popularity that they need at one time to go "for" a favourite actor. Stage design in Poland has become an element of the production on an equal footing with directing and acting, and no less important. At the same time, it remains subordinated to the rigours of the performance as a whole, and does not claim to be an autonomous art, a display of talent and skill independent of the content of the given production.

## CONTEMPORARY PLAYWRIGHTS

Playwrights are not particularly numerous in Poland but a few of them have gained fame reaching far beyond their own country.

In the immediate post-war period, the leading playwright was Leon Chmielewski, who died in 1962. His epic plays, discussing deep philosophical, moral and political problems, overcame the hegemony of bourgeois contemporary repertoire in the Polish theatre. Kruczkowski's *The Germans, Retaliation, The First Day of Freedom* and *The Unknown's Death* have been played abroad with much success; particularly, the two latter plays, written shortly before the author's death, have great artistic and intellectual maturity.

Much wider renown in the world has been won by a playwright of quite a different type and calibre, a master of satire, of the grotesque and the absurd — Sławomir Mrożek. Each of his plays was very well done and amusing, whether *The Police, The Turkey*, or the one-act plays *Fouries, The Party, Out at Sea* and *Strip-tease* — but it was *Tango* that became a true sensation. It was played by a great many theatres,

## FINE ARTS

first at home, then abroad — and was everywhere a major theatrical event.

The third Polish playwright whose work is highly regarded abroad is Tadeusz Różewicz who has been trying successfully to create his own type of theatre: a kind of tragicomedy, almost without action and without the traditional dramatic personae. Różewicz is of the opinion that a theatrical work can be neither an attempt at re-creating reality nor "literature on stage". The theatre of Różewicz is strange, difficult but thrilling and forces the audience to think. His best plays: *The Card Index*, *The Interrupted Act*, *My Little Daughter*, *On All Fours*, *The Funny Old Man* and *An Old Woman Sitting*, have already become "contemporary classics" of Polish drama, some of them having been translated into several languages and played in many European countries.

A peculiar and very "Polish" playwright is Ernest Bryll who consciously harks back to Wyspiański's poetics and impregnates his plays with motifs of spontaneous folk origin and character which he transposes into his own poetic language. His plays: *November Story* and *Kurdeś* are at the same time an interesting polemic contribution to the debate on "Polish problems" and belong to the current of political theatre, so lively in Poland.

Belonging to the same generation as Bryll are also other talented playwrights, such as Stanisław Grochowiak, Ireneusz Iredyński, Andrzej Jarecki, Jarosław Abramow and Janusz Krasinski. Already well-known in Poland, they still wait to win success abroad.

## TRADITIONS OF POLISH PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

The earliest traces of art on Polish territory can be discerned in clay and bronze pottery and metal and amber ornaments dating from prehistoric times. The early Middle Ages saw the development of carved ornamentation of wooden structures, and stone and wooden sculptures representing deities and animals. Artistic craftsmanship flourished following the adoption of Christianity, Poland came largely under the influence of pre-Romanesque and Romanesque art prevailing at the time in the West. With the building of churches and chapels, architectural sculpture developed, mainly in the form of ornamented portals. Examples of 12th and 13th century church portals ornamented with figures, animals and geometrical motifs or figural scenes can be found in Altesia (St. Vincent's Church at Ołbin in Wrocław, the church of the Carthusian nuns in Trzebnica) and in Kuyawy (Holy Trinity Church in Strzelno).

Among the most interesting monuments of Romanesque art are the columns carved in low relief in the Holy Trinity Church in Strzelno. A remarkable example of medieval metal casting are bronze relief portals of Gniezno Cathedral, cast in 1170 in a local workshop. Divided into eighteen panels, each in a richly embellished frame, they depict scenes from the life and martyrdom of St. Adalbert. Ornamented floors are to be found in Gniezno, Cracow and Wislica churches and wall paintings exploiting religious themes at Tum near Łęczyca and Czerwik. Books were copied by hand and illustrated with miniatures and illuminations by monks in scriptoria attached to monasteries and cathedrals. The first Polish miniatures date back to the 12th century. The Romanesque period also saw the flourishing of goldsmithery, embroidery and weaving. One of the treasures of art from that period is the famous *Szczerbiec*, the richly adorned coronation sword of the Polish kings.



The Gothic style did not appear in Poland until the 13th century and flourished in the 14th and 15th centuries. Gothic sculpture, especially in Silesia and Little Poland, reached a high artistic standard. In architectural sculpture which also developed in that period (for example the churches in Trzebnica, Strzegom, Wrocław and Cracow), ornamental motifs were combined increasingly with figures of saints and religious scenes characterized by the attenuation and elegance that were a hallmark of Gothic. Another important art form was sepulchral sculpture (viz. the tombs of the Piast princes of Silesia in Wrocław, Krzeszów, Opole, Henryków and Legnica, and of the Polish kings Ladislaus the Short, Casimir the Great and Ladislaus Jagiello at Wawel in Cracow). Wood carving flourished in the form of figures of saints, madonnas and crucifixes. The 15th century saw the most exuberant proliferation of sculpture which evolved in various styles, from what was known as the "beautiful" or "soft" style (figures of Beautiful Madonnas, usually painted, endowed with noble elegance and subtlety, for instance the Krużiowa Madonna), to the realistic "broken" style exemplified by the numerous painted and gilded wooden polychrome altarpieces, so called winged altarpieces, for instance the Holy Trinity Altar at Wawel.

The work of Wit Stwos (c. 1447-1533), one of the most distinguished exponents of the late Gothic, marked a turning point in Polish art. He executed the famous High Altar in the Church of Our Lady in Cracow, with a dramatic scene of the dormition of the Virgin in the central panel and impressive scenes of everyday life in relief side panels. Another famous example of Wit Stwos's work is the magnificent marble sarcophagus of King Casimir Jagiello in Wawel Cathedral. The influence of Wit Stwos on late Gothic art in Poland was considerable.

Gothic painting was represented by miniatures in Silesia and Cracow wall painting (for instance that in Łąd on the Warta or Niepołomice stained glass (Cracow and Toruń) and above all by altar (panel) painting which developed in the 15th century. Painting also underwent a transformation from a mystic, idealistic style (*Lament* from Chomranice to an increasingly realistic one (Dominican Polyptych), acquiring at the beginning of the 16th century forms which combined Gothic and Renaissance elements (Altar of St. John the Almoner). Among the numerous workshops which executed polychrome altars the greatest prominence was gained by artists from Little Poland (the Cracow-Sac school), Silesia, Great Poland and Pomerania. In artistic craftsmanship goldsmithery (reliquaries, chalices), embroidery and furniture making were of the highest standard.

Renaissance art developed from the early 16th century at the court of King Sigismund the Old in Cracow, who brought Italian artists to

land and commissioned them to reconstruct Wawel Castle. Mention the first of all to Bartolomeo Berecci, one of the authors of sculptures in the Sigismund Chapel, who executed the tomb of Sigismund the Old, with the figure of the king in a natural pose, lying as if asleep. This wall tomb in its niche with rich ornamental frame came an inspiration for many sculptors of Polish Renaissance tombs and influenced the tomb of Bishop Gamrat in Wawel Cathedral by Giovanni Maria Padovano, or the tomb of Bishop Uchański in Łowicz (Jan Michałowicz of Urzędów). A double, two-level tomb was typical of Polish sepulchral sculpture (e.g. the tomb of the Górka family in Wrocław Cathedral by Geronimo Canavesi). In sculpture Mannerism manifested itself in extravagant, disconcerting ornamentation and the contorted poses in which figures were cast (the tomb of Stephen Batory in Wawel Cathedral by Santi Gucci).

Renaissance painting in Poland did not attain the same level as sculpture. The new style was to be found in realistic genre scenes and in religious illuminations (Balthasar Behem's *Codex Picturatus*). The first Renaissance painter was Stanisław Samostrzelnik, who decorated the theological book of the Szydłowiecki family with miniatures. The 16th century marked also the beginning of history painting with *The Battle of Orsza* by an unidentified artist, and especially of portraiture which was developed towards the end of the century by the Silesian painter Marcin Kober, the author of the famous portrait of Stephen Batory, full of dignity and majesty.

The Baroque period produced numerous splendid architectural sculptures, including stucco works, such as the festoons, garlands, cartouches and figure sculptures, which characterized the opulent, richly decorated interiors of churches and palaces. They were executed by, among others, the famous Gdańsk artist Andreas Schlüter, who did the stuccos in the palace in Wilanów and relief sculptures in the Krasiński palace in Cracow.

The 17th and early 18th centuries also witnessed a rapid development of wood carving, especially rich, gilded altarpieces and figure sculptures full of expression and dynamism.

A singular aspect of baroque painting may be seen in the so-called anonymous portraits, the work of anonymous artists which combine a genuine naïve realism with love of decoration and seize upon certain elegant and characteristic features of the sitter. Sarmatian portraiture included coffin paintings (unknown elsewhere in the world) i.e. small figures painted on tin plates, placed on coffins during the funeral ceremony and later hung in the church.

Aside by side with the native current there developed the art patronized by the courts of Kings Sigismund III Vasa, Ladislaus IV Vasa and



especially John III Sobieski. In the baroque period religious painting flourished, and, towards the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries, illusionistic wall paintings were especially popular. In artistic craftsmanship baroque and oriental elements were interwoven (tapestries, gobelins, noblemen's dress (especially waist sashes), and furniture in the styles of Gdańsk and Kolbuszowa).

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries classicism gained ground. The beginnings of the new style were formed under the patronage of King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski. His artistic ideas were put into practice by his first court painter Marcello Bacciarelli, the master of the court studio from which many painters emerged, author of many portraits and decorative ceiling compositions in the Royal Castle and Łazienki Palace. Other significant figures active at the royal court included Bernardo Bellotto called Canaletto, the author of more than twenty magnificent Warsaw townscapes which now possess a documentary value for their accurate observation of Warsaw life in the period, and Jan Bogumił Płersch. Jean Pierre Norblin, who came from France at the invitation of the Czartoryski family, introduced the genre style in Polish realism.

The development of classicist sculpture was associated with the statues and busts executed by Andreas Le Brun and his assistant Giacomo Monaldi during the redecoration of the interiors of the Royal Castle and Łazienki Palace. Under the Congress Kingdom Paweł Maliński and Jakub Tatarakiewicz, authors of the reliefs on the building of the Grand Theatre in Warsaw, played the most important role in the field of sculpture. Classicism also saw a great flowering of artists' craftsmanship (weaving and embroidery), ceramics (the manufactories of Baranów, Cmielów and Korzec) and glass (the manufactories of Urzecz and Naliboki).

In the 19th century chief place among the arts was assumed by painting. In a Poland deprived of independent statehood and riven by the partitions, the struggle for a national art assumed a particularly poignant form. The first signs of romanticism appeared in the late 18th and early 19th century. Among leading proponents of that period were Aleksander Orłowski and Antoni Brodowski. Romantic painting was best exemplified by Piotr Michałowski (1800-85), an outstanding colourist whose paintings include expressive and dynamic battle scenes, mainly of the Napoleonic wars, horses and realistic portraits of peasants. Besides Michałowski another significant figure in Polish romanticism was the portraitist Henryk Rodakowski, whose paintings (*General Dembiński*, *Portrait of the Artist's Mother*) won him European fame and recognition from such prominent artists as the French romantics Eugène Delacroix.

In the second half of the 19th century two trends predominated in Polish painting: the presentation of historical scenes and paintings showing the beauty of the Polish countryside and its inhabitants. Immediate expression to Poland's experiences in the January Insurrection (1831) and its aftermath of defeat was given in four dramatic cycles of drawings by Artur Grottger entitled respectively *Warsaw*, *Polonia*, *Rebellion* and *War*.

History painting aimed at "heartening the people" was evolved by Jan Matejko whose large ebullient canvases, full of expressive realism and economy of detail, extol the past of the Polish people (*The Battle of Grunwald*, *The Prussian Homage*, *Stephen Batory at Pskov*).

The predominance of realistic elements, characteristic of late 19th century art, was reflected in an efflorescence of landscape and genre painting, especially scenes of town and country life. Here we should mention above all Wojciech Gerson, an outstanding educator and painter of beautiful scenes of the Tatra mountains, Aleksander Kotis, a subtle realist famous for his scenes of peasant life, and Józef Szymanowski who extolled the Polish landscape. A prominent place in realistic genre painting is occupied by Józef Chełmoński whose canvases *Goswina*, *Storks* and *The Four-in-Hand*, reveal the artists' exceptional sensitivity to the beauty of the Polish countryside. Of great artistic value are the works of the short-lived Maksymilian Gierzyński, who selected genre scenes and incidents from the January Insurrection, and those of Józef Brandt, who painted magnificent battle scenes.

An exceptional role in Polish art was played by Aleksander Gierzyński who was concerned chiefly with light and colour and adapted some of the impressionist innovations while simultaneously developing realistic elements (*Summer House*, *Sandmen*, *Jewish Holiday*). Władysław Podkowiński and Józef Pankiewicz, the outstanding teacher of the large group of Polish painters known as colourists, transplanted to Poland the ideas of French Impressionism. Olga Boznańska, a portraitist of exquisite refinement who lived in Paris was another exponent of Impressionism. Henryk Siemiradzki, who spent most of his life in Rome, won European acclaim for his academic yet impressive treatment of ancient themes.

The years 1890-1918, referred to in Polish cultural history as the era of Young Poland, were characterized by an exuberant development of the plastic arts. One of the most typical exponents of Young Poland was Jacek Malczewski who painted portraits, realistic pictures on symbolic themes and symbolic compositions with fairy-tale motifs imbued with a mood of melancholy and reflection. Another important current in that period was landscape and genre painting which blended realism and the use of light and colour typical of Impressionism. This strain



was represented by Jan Stanisławski, Leon Wyczółkowski, Julian Fałat and Stanisław Masłowski. The greatest personality of Young Poland was Stanisław Wyspiański, playwright and stage designer, who also did many portraits and landscapes in pastel and played an important role in the renaissance of Polish decorative art (stained glass windows, interior design, artistic craftsmanship) and applied graphic art. Among other prominent artists of the period mention should be made of Józef Mehoffer, who designed stained glass windows and painted decorative pictures of a symbolic nature, as well as portraits, and the symbolist Witold Wojtkiewicz and Edward Okuń (who was also a prominent graphic artist) who painted fairy-tale-like scenes. In France Władysław Słowiński, a friend of Gauguin, painted two-dimensional pictures with brilliant colouring and using decorative effects, which stimulated the formation of modern Polish art.

In the period of Young Poland sculpture came back into its own and while adapting various strains in European art acquired specific national features. The most outstanding sculptor of the period was Xawery Dunikowski, whose metaphorical and symbolic compositions, portrait monuments and religious sculptures were characterized by power of expression and concentration of form. Impressive and symbolic sculptures were executed by Wacław Szymanowski and Konstanty Laszczka.

#### THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

The two decades of the inter-war period saw a variety of trends in art which was reflected in the emergence of many groups with various programmes. While adopting new ideas from European art of the 20th century, artists aimed at creating an individual national style. The first avant-garde group, the Formists, included in its programme cubist expressionism and futurism blended with Polish folk and medieval art (Zbigniew and Andrzej Pronaszkowski, Tytus Czyżewski, Leon Chwiście and Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz — painter, playwright and theatre reformer).

The "Rytm" group (Władysław Skoczylas, Zofia Stryjeńska, Eugeniusz Zak and Tymon Niesiołowski) developed plane painting and rhythmic stylization inspired by folk art. The "Blok", "Praesens" and "a.r." (revolutionary artists) groups were close to constructivism and cultivated non-objective art while at the same time propagating social radicalism and art for the masses. These groups were represented by Władysław Strzemiński, the proponent of the theory of unism, Mieczysław Szczuka, Henryk Berlewi and the still active Henryk Stażewski. Progressive socio-political views were also spread by the painters from the "Phygian Cap" group (Franciszek Bartoszek, Zygmunt Borowski and

Wacław Berman) and the Cracow group, whose work combined elements of cubism, expressionism and abstraction (Maria Jarema, Adam Tarnowski and Jonaś Stern).

In modern Polish painting a considerable role was played by colourists who emphasized the importance of colour in pictorial structure. The tendencies were represented by the "Jednoróg", "Zwornik" and finally the "K.P." group, this last made up of Pankiewicz's pupils who formed a "Paris Committee" (K.P.) and left for Paris to study colour painting. Upon their return to Poland (1931) they gained many followers. Among the K.P. group special mention is due to Jan Cybis, Tadeusz Indrka-Cybis, Zygmunt Waliszewski and Tadeusz Piotr Potworowski. Great importance was also attached to mural painting, which was cultivated by Felician Kowarski and his followers Leonard Pękalski and Wacław Taranczewski. The most outstanding of the artists who worked in Paris was Tadeusz Makowski who, drawing on cubist ideas and the traditions of folk art, created an individual, intimate and highly style remarkable as to colour and form.

Sculpture often followed the general trends prevailing in painting: the second August Zamojski, Henryk Kuna of the "Rytm" group, Katarzyna Kobro-Strzemińska of the "Blok" group and Henryk Wichński of the Cracow group drew from the same sources as their colleagues in the field of painting. Jan Szczepkowski developed a specific folk and national form of sculpture. A classical, monumental strain was represented by Edward Witting, Alfons Karny, Stanisław Horno-Popławski and Franciszek Strykowski who combined it with a realistic observation of nature.

The inter-war years were also a good period for graphic art (Władysław Skoczylas, Stanisław Ostoja-Chrostowski, Tadeusz Cieślowski and Tadeusz Kuliewicz) and applied art (Tadeusz Gronowski, the founder of the modern Polish poster) as well as decorative art, exemplified by the creation of the Łódź cooperative which attracted many participating artists who employed folk motifs in their designs of furniture, fabrics, ceramics and glassware.

#### MODERN POLISH ART

After the Second World War Polish art had to face new tasks connected with the reconstruction of the country and the implementation of radical socio-political reforms. Artistic life was reorganized and based on the far-sighted cultural policy of People's Poland. As early as 7 August 1944 the first organizational meeting was held in the hall of the Polish Artists' Union which was founded as a national ideological and professional organization representing all Polish plastic



artists. The network of art colleges was rapidly expanded. The state became the main patron of the arts initiating a broad-scale popularization campaign.

In the immediate post-war years the dominant group was composed of those outstanding colourists who had distinguished themselves before the war and who in People's Poland were appointed to responsible posts in the art academies. The leading representatives were Jan Cybulski, Zbigniew Pronaszko, Artur Nacht-Samborski, Eugeniusz Ebisch, Czesław Rzepiński and Wacław Taranczewski. Felician Kowarski, a painter of the pre-war period, retained his prominent position, painting stylized, monumental pictures with an ideological content (e.g. "The Member of the Proletariat Party").

The years 1949-55 were a period of great experimentalism in the field of committed art aimed at contributing to the social transformation of the country. This found expression in the adoption of the principles of socialist realism. By employing various methods, mostly drawing on the tradition of 19th century realism, artists either attempted to present the reality of People's Poland or took up historical subjects with a progressive social and political message. This variety of realism was represented by Helena Kraiewska, Juliusz Krajewski, Włodzimierz Zakrzewski, Andrzej Strumiłło, Antoni Łyżwański, Aleksander Kobrze Wojciech Fangor and Bohdan Urbanowicz. In 1950-55 large scale work on wall painting was undertaken in the reconstructed old districts of Warsaw, Gdańsk and Lublin. In this field such artists as Jan Sokołowski, Bohdan Urbanowicz and Juliusz Studnicki continued Felician Kowarski's programme of monumental, stylized visions based on clear decorative arrangement. Similar principles guided artists in the Art College in Gdańsk (the so-called Sopot school). Among the artists in favour of artistic commitment but proposing the use of modern forms mention is due to Marek Włodarski who was one of the founders of the "Artes" group in pre-war Poland. Expressive metaphors in the service of social criticism was the hallmark of the outstanding painter and draughtsman Bronisław Linke. The work of Andrzej Wroblewski also tended in the direction of a tragic, humanist eloquence.

Cracow was a prolific artistic centre with the Cracow group represented by such outstanding artists as Maria Jarema and Jonaś Stern and a new group known as the "Young Painters" (also known as the Group of Modern Artists). Their exhibitions were a demonstration of avant-garde art dominated by expressionistic and surrealistic elements combined with social commitment. Many prominent artists began their careers here, including Tadeusz Kantor whose art evolved from surrealist and metaphorical compositions to tachisme which departs from the traditional concept of painting and moves towards creating "events".

He did not limit himself to plastic media, for example in his happenings or in his long-standing theatrical activity. Tadeusz Brzozowski has created his own poetic world of forms and colours which oscillate between figurative allusions, surrealist elements and expressive abstraction. Jerzy Nowosielski employs modern stylization drawn from old times, while Kazimierz Mikulski in his poetic compositions consistently uses the surrealist method of using startling juxtapositions of people and objects.

The winter of 1956-57 witnessed a change in favour of abstract art. The exuberant development of painting presented a very complex picture. The subtle colourist Tadeusz P. Potworowski continued his old work, to which culminated in almost abstract compositions inspired by landscape. Henryk Stażewski remains faithful to geometrical abstraction, creating compositions endowed with both sculptural and pictorial qualities. Alfred Lenica combines elements of surrealism and abstraction. Aleksander Kobudej, whose whole work reflects the development of art in People's Poland, has moved from realism to abstract expression and experiments with texture, which have also been taken up by Bronisław Kierzkowski and Marian Bogusz. Other artists like Jan Tadeusz Jerzy Tchórzewski, Stefan Gierowski and Tadeusz Dominik have, each in his own fashion, come all the way from figural representation to expressive abstraction. Among the numerous abstractionists of the younger generation mention is also due to Zbigniew Gostomski, Rajmund Ziemiński and Zbigniew Makowski. An attempt at modern figural representation combined with elements of surrealism and abstraction has been made by Jan Lebenstein.

side abstract art realism continues to Flourish (Helena and others: Krajewski and Benon Liberski), often with expressive elements of colour (Jerzy Krawczyk). An old-fashioned artistic position is still occupied by colourists of the older generation.

In the post-war period graphic art has also proceeded apace, characterized by versatility of techniques and a search for links with painting. The techniques are mixed and colours often applied. The most outstanding experiments are Tadeusz Kulisiewicz, Konrad Szrednicki, Adam Warwick, Mieczysław Wejman, Roman Opałka, Jerzy Panek, Józef Gielniowski and Halina Chrostowska-Piotrowicz.

Interesting phenomena occurred also in sculpture. Consistent in its development but still full of vitality was Danikowski's art, which found a most complete expression in massive monuments combining sculpture and architecture (the Monument to the Insurgents on St. Anne's Hill in Chopin voivodship). Realistic sculpture continues to develop, its most important representatives being artists who had begun their careers



before the war such as Alfons Karny, Franciszek Strynkiewicz, Mariat Wnuk, Ludwika Nitschowa and Franciszek Masiak. Worthy of note were the sculptures of Antoni Kenar, founder of the so-called Zakopane school which married the traditions of folk art to a modern understanding of form. A turn towards distortion and abstraction and to a search for new textures in metal was visible in the work of Alina Ślesicka Alina Szapocznikow, Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz and Magdalena Wjécek. Wood was often used as material, for example by Adam Smolana, and also by Jerzy Beres and Stanisław Kulon who tended towards lyricism combined with folk motifs. The work of Władysław Hasiór has an individual character. His sculptures are made of scrap metal and discarded objects of various kinds fused into astonishing compositions to which he often adds light and sound effects, thus enhancing their impact.

In recent times an individual kind of expression has been attained by monumental sculpture. A new type of monument has been created consisting in a huge spatial construction which expresses a definite ideological statement, usually without the benefit of figures. The most remarkable works of this sort are Grunwald Monument by Jerzy Ban-dura, the Monument-Mausoleum at Radogoszcz by Tadeusz Łodzia-na, the Monument at Majdanek by Wiktor Tokin, the Monument to Those Who Fell in the Struggle for the Peoples Power near Czorsztyn by Władysław Hasiór, and the Monument to the Silesian Insurgents in Katowice by Gustaw Zemła.

The past decade has seen a definite artistic revival. The transformations taking place in social life and in the world of science and technology have had a fundamental influence on changes in the world of art. The return to figural art, the birth of the "new realism", pop art and happenings are all evidence of the interest taken by artists in contemporary developments. Advances in technology and the visual media have given rise to kinetic art, op art, conceptualism, cybernetic art etc. Some of these phenomena have given way to other artistic tendencies as the search for new contents and forms has proceeded. Besides Warsaw and Cracow, the traditional centres of Polish art, the most interesting artistic phenomena have appeared in Wrocław, Łódź, Poznań and Gdańsk. Wrocław in particular became for a short period the centre of the Polish avant-garde.

In Polish painting of the last ten years three tendencies have been dominant. The metaphorical-expressive trend, the most interesting and original attempt in Polish painting to define the artist's relationship to the world, is represented — besides such already established artists as Kazimierz Mikulski and Zbigniew Makowski — by Stanisław Fijałkowski, Janusz Przybylski, Jan Karwot, Anna Güntner, Maria Anto and

Włodzisław Markowski. To the constructivist-visual current, which is concerned with the search for new plastic structures, should be included — in addition to the still vital Henryk Stażewski — Zofia Artymowska, Edward Winiarski, Jerzy Rosołowicz and Zbigniew Dębak. The most interesting representatives of the "new figuration" to put forward their original proposals have been Jan Dobkowski, Marek Sapetto and Wiesław Włodarski, Teresa Pagowska, Antoni Fałat and the "Wprosi" ("Point-inward") group, introducing journalistic and social themes. Another artist whose development has been of interest is Józef Szajna, who is also known for his theatrical sets. Using original visual means he has given a universal dimension to his own personal wartime experiences in a new expression from easel painting to spatial arrangements of the environmental type.

In graphics too a clear differentiation has taken place over the past decade. On the one hand many artists make use of contemporary graphic techniques (Lucjan Mianowski, Jan Aleksium) and build up a picture out of photographic elements. On the other hand Polish artists continue to practice the traditional, laborious techniques of etching, aquatint and copperplate engraving. This approach is favoured above all by a numerous group of Cracow artists, including Jacek Gaj, Andrzej Pietsch, Tadeusz Jackowski, Wojciech Krzywobłocki and Marta Kucner, who on the model of the old masters seek intimate contact with the viewer, desiring to get across to him a personal, reflective attitude to the world. Great promise is shown by the work of Krzysztof Kuczwowski, a representative of the youngest generation of Cracow graphic artists.

In addition to the outstanding Polish sculptors of the previous period already discussed, a number of new outstanding talents have sprung up. The most artistically mature is Ryszard Wojciechowski. Karol Bronia-Ławski made a dazzling début, dazzling the public at the Venice Biennale in 1970 with a dynamic composition made up of dozens of figures. A different concept, of concentrated reflection on man's fate, was put forward by Adam Myjak. Contemporary Polish medal-making has been freed of the limitations of occasional themes to become a form of free intimate creative statement. This can be seen most clearly in the medals of Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, Bronisław Chromy and Adolf Ryszk-a. Thus the diversity of the plastic arts in post-war Poland, allowing as it does for the coexistence of many artistic concepts and attitudes, has given birth to many outstanding creative personalities who, although probably joining in the mainstream of European and world art, have at the same time retained their own separate identity by continuing the most valuable achievements of previous generations.



## APPLIED ART

Among the various fields of applied art in People's Poland, first place must go to the poster which has won international recognition. The Polish post-war poster, almost totally uncommercial, became a dominant of unlimited freedom, while expressing the need for ideological commitment, stimulating the public imagination and provoking specific social responses. The contemporary poster borrows both from graphic and painting, makes use of symbols and metaphors and is characterized by conciseness of communication. Those elements were developed for the first time after the war by Tadeusz Trepcowski who gave his posters a powerful emotional and intellectual charge. He was followed by a whole pleiad of prominent graphic artists including Henryk Tomaszewski, Józef Mroszczak, Eryk Lipiński, Roman Cieśliewicz, Jan Lenica, Jan Młodożeniec, Waldemar Świerzy, Franciszek Starowieyski, Maciej Urbaniec and Julian Pałka. There also exists a constant tendency to replace descriptiveness with compactness of composition, and to enrich the existing store of conventional signs. Besides posters, book illustration has attained a high standard. (Jan Marcin Szancer, Antoni Umiechowski, Józef Wilkoń, Janusz Stanny and Janusz Grabiański). Polish applied art continues the fine traditions initiated by the Łódź cooperative (which still coordinates the work of different artists and markets their products). Artistic weaving (Eleonora Plutyńska, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Wojciech Sadleir) is showing particular development as is pottery (Julia Kotarbińska, Rudolf Krzywiec, Janina Karcewska, Henryk Lula and Rufin Kominek), glassware (Halina Jastrzębowska, Sigmund, Henryk Albin Tomaszewski, Ludwik Kiczura and Zbigniew Horbowy), furniture and interior design.

## GALLERIES AND OPEN-AIR EXHIBITIONS

The plastic arts, like other fields of art in Poland, enjoy the patronage of the state and of various civic organizations. In National, Regional and Local Museums there exist departments of modern art, which collect paintings, sculptures and items of graphic and decorative art and also arrange exhibitions in these fields. In larger towns there are also special Offices for Art Exhibitions which organize both one man and group exhibitions. Other galleries, like the Krzysztofory in Cracow, the Współczesna and the Foksal in Warsaw, which are often of experimental character and run by artists and critics, arrange discussions, lectures and meetings. Very often the premises for exhibitions are let by institutions only indirectly connected with plastic arts (community centres and International Press and Book Clubs).

At these galleries and exhibitions, being financed by the state, are not only works of a commercial nature, but they provide opportunities for talented institutions and private individuals to purchase works of art. An interesting artistic venture are the open air exhibitions organized with the financial backing of work establishments. In 1965 the Kłobag in Kłobag organized a Biennale of Spatial Forms which was made possible thanks to the financial and organizational assistance of the AMECH works. As a result of that undertaking the spatial forms created by the artists as a gift to the town were so arranged as to form the nucleus of a permanent open air gallery. The organization of open air exhibitions in cooperation with work establishments, apart from giving an opportunity for the artists to exchange ideas among themselves, had the additional effect of creating a favourable climate in which contemporary art can reach a wider public and which brings artists closer to the working class. The example of the Kłobag venture has been followed by other towns where open air exhibitions, mainly of sculpture, are organized under the patronage of various institutions e.g. the plein air of wooden sculpture in Hajnówka, and of stone sculpture in Sułkowice. The open air exhibitions in Osieki in Kozalin voivodship, established since 1963, have become an important artistic event. They have evolved into interesting symposia attended by artists, critics and enthusiasts of art, with foreign visitors also participating.

## PRIMITIVE PAINTING

A separate position in contemporary art is occupied by primitive painting known also as naïve or Sunday painting, a kind of spontaneous plastic activity. Its exponents, usually outsiders in their own social milieu, do not cater for any specific public and their work arises simply out of an inner need to create. This type of art is characterized by a peculiar variety of naïve realism, consisting in the accurate reconstruction of details, and the interweaving of elements taken from nature with extravagant creations of the imagination. Of the numerous representatives of naïve painting the most famous was Nikifor of Krynica who created a world of visions of exceptional colourful exuberance in the form of landscapes, figurative compositions and peculiar still lifes presented by a fairy tale like atmosphere and involuntary grotesque. Another naïve painter is Teofil Ociepka who does fantastic oil paintings with themes drawn from fairy tales, Silesian folk legends and religious motifs, which are distinguished by vividness of colour. Naïve painting, like children's painting, has had a considerable influence on contemporary art.



## FOLK CULTURE IN POLAND

In Poland where the process of intensive industrialization and urbanization began later than in the countries of Western Europe, and recently as thirty years ago almost two thirds of the population were still living in rural areas. The inhabitants of the countryside not only carried on their traditional agricultural occupations, often performed with traditional implements, but also cultivated ancient customs and rites, while satisfying their aesthetic needs with their own art. Almost every region of Poland showed individual differences in styles and tastes, in customs and legends. It is a remarkable fact that, according to ethnographers, these regional differences largely coincide with the extent of the territories occupied at one time by the various tribes that were to make up the Polish nation.

Folk music is remarkably rich and diversified in rhythms, melodies and atmosphere. The peky, lively mazur, the fast and fiery oberek, the slow and melodious kujawiak — these are the most typical Polish dances which inspired Chopin's famous, stylized mazurkas. In the middle of the 19th century, the mazur was combined in France with the polka (of Czech origin) and, under the name of "polka-mazurka" remained for several decades very much in vogue in ball-rooms. The ceremonial sedate polonaise which was a great success in Europe's 18th-century ball-rooms, is derived from the folk walked dance. The dances of southern Poland are different: the very lively cracovienne, in two-four time, with an original, syncopated rhythm, and the mountaineer dashing, almost acrobatic dances, related to those of Moldavia and Hungary. In recent decades too Polish folk music has permeated the creative work of such famous composers as Szymanowski or Lutosławski. Folk music is also cultivated, in pure or stylized form, by several hundred song-and-dance ensembles, both professional and amateur, representing all regions of Poland.

Folk customs and rites reveal a great diversity. Some of them are of very old origin. Nearly every region, indeed nearly every village, has its own various stories, tales and legends, spread from mouth to mouth, containing the historical vicissitudes and specific experiences of the region. The richest in this respect (as in many others) is the folklore of the Polish mountain regions; e.g. the legend of the famous Janosik, the Polish Robin Hood, has fascinated both youngsters and adults up to the present day.

The regional traditions of folk art are also very rich. They have found expression in rural architecture, in weaving and regional costumes, in the forms of objects of everyday use and, by imitating "man-made" and sacred art, in painting and sculpture. The assimilation of folk art was no ordinary copying, however; the country folk transformed the models and enriched them with their own artistic inventiveness, in ways which differ in various regions of the country.

In modern times, spontaneous creation in folk art is becoming a much less frequent phenomenon because of the social transformations taking place in the countryside and of the strong impact of cultural patterns propagated by the mass media. This does not mean that the countryside has yielded completely to their influence; there are regions where folk elements of folklore have persisted to the present day. In order to prevent their total disappearance, specialists are engaging in wide-ranging activities to protect them (museums, special research programmes, proper popularization).

In Poland, a land abounding in forests, wood was the basic building material. A great many fine specimens of wooden architecture have survived in the countryside; they include cottages, farm buildings, churches and wayside shrines.

Cottages were for the most part covered with thatched roofs, sometimes — mainly in the highlands — with wooden shingles. The construction of the roof, the proportions of walls, the interior layout and the decoration of door-frames and gables were different in almost every region; experts distinguish more than a dozen local types of rural architecture harmonized perfectly with the landscape. Among the most beautiful are cottages and shepherd's cabins in the highland region of Podhale. Their forms inspired the original "Zakopane style", introduced into architecture by Stanisław Witkiewicz. In some parts of the country, particularly in Silesia, in the regions of Cracow and Rzeszów, cottages are painted blue or — as in the village of Zalipie or in the Łęka region — have flowers and floral garlands painted on them.

Wooden windmills, no longer used for grinding grain but protected as monuments of the past, are becoming an increasingly rare feature of the rural landscape. Also few and far between are picturesque old

inns and road houses: the best example is to be found at Jeleśnia near Żywiec. Quite numerous, on the other hand, are Poland's beautiful and romantic chapels and small wayside shrines.

Religion has left even more distinct traces in folk sculpture. Its most popular motif throughout Poland is the "Christ in Sorrow", picture of a tired man in sorrowful meditation, his head resting on his hand, his elbow on his knee. Another typically Polish motif is "Christ Falling under His Cross", especially characteristic of the southern parts of the country.

Very frequent are also sculptures of the Virgin Mary, especially of the "Pieta" type, with Madonna holding her dead Son's body on her knees. Among the saints, the most popular with sculptors were Our Lady of Skape, St. John Nepomucen who guarded against floods and St. Florian who guarded against fire. Besides, almost every neighbourhood had its local patron saint, as in Italy.

Sculpture of a secular character was extremely rare in old times. It was not until recent decades that making sculptures of national heroes came into fashion in the countryside, mostly on the basis of photographs of their statues in cities. In recent times, it has been possible to encounter other secular themes from everyday life. The tradition of carving holy images has remained alive chiefly in the regions of Rzeszów and Podhale; in other parts of Poland, however, there also occur folk artists who still cultivate their simple but beautiful art.

Folk painting in Poland boasts traditions much older than sculpture. Here, too, religious themes prevail and pictures of the Virgin Mary are the most frequent. There are, however, many local variants of the subject, modelled for the most part after famous effigies of the Madonna: those from Częstochowa, Leżajsk, Dzików — and even after French, Austrian and Spanish paintings. Images of Christ, predominant in sculpture, are rare in painting. The Lord's saints, on the other hand, who according to popular beliefs guarded against various misfortune as well as local patrons, were popular with rural artists.

Entirely different patterns of folk painting existed in Poland's eastern territories: there icons were painted deriving from Byzantine art which nowadays enjoy particular popularity with collectors and command enormous sums.

The very original painting on glass, practised in almost all parts of Poland, was especially popular in Silesia and Podhale. Apart from religious scenes, paintings on glass often represent highland robbers, especially Janosik, the most famous of them.

Folk wood-engraving was widespread in Poland; it also showed not only figures and scenes but was held much lower in popular esteem than

sculpture. This branch of folk art has now been entirely forgotten in the countryside and survives only in museum collections.

Polish folk pottery is greatly diversified; in certain centres, pots and bowls were baked glazed, in others they were baked without glazing; in some regions, engraved decorations were favoured, elsewhere different painting techniques were used. Ornamentation was geometric, abstract or naturalistic — the latter using most often floral motifs.

Widespread all over Poland was tile-making, related to pottery; it differed from region to region and was often very original.

Polish folk costumes are remarkable for their beauty, elaborateness and diversity of colour. In the Podhale region, many of the inhabitants still wear them as workaday clothes, in other regions they are taken away to the chest on festive occasions only — but this tradition is also found almost everywhere. Folk costumes have revealed so many national differences that Poland is a true El Dorado for lovers of ethnology and students of costume.

The colourfulness and originality of Polish folk costumes are a result of a high standard of folk weaving which still exists, although it is now contracting under the pressure of the textile industry. The most characteristic of Poland are striped cloths of various colours. Striped patterns prevail in central Poland. The most famous are those of the Podhale region — with red predominating but, in the opinion of experts, the "rainbow" striped patterns of the Opoczno region, with as many as thirty different colours, are superior. The Kielce region favours red colour stripes, red and black or white and black, while in the region of Zawiercie, brown and purple are added to the range of colours. There are these rigid rules, because the arrangement, width and diversity of coloured stripes are different in almost every parish or even village. In some parts of Poland, checked patterns, circles and other geometric motifs are also popular.

Embroidery has rich and varied traditions in Poland. They are most common in the Polish highlands (as indeed many other forms of folk art), and embroidered decorations on the upper front part of the highlanders' tunics of white homespun, called "parzenice", are an object of pride and rivalry among their owners.

Tile-making, on the other hand, was limited to a few villages among which Koniaków in the Beskid region and Bobowa at the foot of the Beskids have been renowned to the present day for great skill in this art.

In the field of folk furniture-making, the most interesting are carved and painted chests, the customary dowry of village brides. The richly decorated Cracow chests enjoy particular fame.



There are also in Poland several centres of folk smithery — in again the regions of Podhale, Warsaw and Kielce stand out. Colour paper cut-outs are another form favoured by Polish folk artists mainly in the Łowicz, Sieradz, Kurpie and Podlasie regions.

### PATRONAGE OF FOLK ART

Folk art, threatened with complete extinction and oblivion in the wake of the transformations brought about by modern civilization, has been recognized in People's Poland as an important element of national culture and surrounded with solicitous care. This is a very difficult task — for two reasons. First, some traditions of artistic handicraft have died out completely and cannot be revived; the works of the old masters are therefore protected as monuments in ethnographic museums. Secondly, the great demand for products of folk art on the part of urban customers and of foreign visitors to Poland, threatens to transform it into a mass-production souvenir industry. As soon as the artist ceases to sculpt or paint to satisfy his own inner need, his work loses its individual artistic expression.

In Poland, fortunately, forms of patronage over folk artists have been successfully developed, which largely prevent their art from turning into mechanical expertise. This was preceded by the arduous work of seeking out, cataloguing, collecting and describing all objects of folk art; this work was done by the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences, university departments of ethnography, museums and the Polish Ethnographical Society — with the special support of the Ministry of Culture and Art. Many competitions organized for the most active masters of folk art, have encouraged them to carry on their creative work. The most deserving works were awarded prizes as shown at exhibitions, and their authors received State distinctions, scholarships, or — in the case of old people — pensions.

Cooperatives and teams of artists organized in "Cepelia", the Folk Art Industry and Handicraft Centre, have been established in all villages where traditions of folk art and artistic handicraft still survive; Cepelia also cooperates with folk artists working individually. It engages them only in purchasing and selling products of folk art but, as need arises, also in supplying artists with necessary materials. Above all, however, Cepelia, employing many ethnographers, performs artistic supervision over folk production and prevents it from being transformed into ordinary craftsman's trade. Most of the objects sold in Cepelia stores reflect the individual talents and tastes of the various artists. Even those articles which are copied and mass-produced and, consequently, do not have the value of being unique, are manufactured under super-

vision which ensures at least that the traditional style of the given region is preserved.

Many cooperatives, Cepelia has organized regional song-and-dance ensembles cultivating rural folklore. Some of them have won great popularity and have performed with much success at home and abroad. Every year, many national and regional festivals and reviews of folk art and folk customs are held in Poland. The most important of these are the International Festival of Highland Folklore in Zakopane, the National Festival of Song and Dance Ensembles in Zielona Góra, the Polish Culture Week in Wisła and Szczyrk, the Folk Art Fair in Wrocław, and the festivals and reviews in Białystok, Będzin, Olśztyn, Poznań, Pławy, Ciechocinek, Tarnów and Kazimierz.

### FOLK INSPIRATION IN MODERN ART

That folk music inspired the work of the most distinguished modern artists — to cite Chopin and Szymanowski, so folk art inspires and sustains outstanding Polish artists. We have already mentioned its strong influence on modern stage design. The regional techniques of rural weaving — e.g. the double-warped and the Jacquard-loom techniques — have been put to excellent use, improved and raised to the level of artistic standard in fine-arts schools teaching decorative weaving. Transformed decorative folk motifs and old-dye-stuff recipes have then contributed to the development of artistic weaving which has won great renown for itself. The names of Magdalena Abakanowicz, Andrzej Gudkay and Jolanta Owidzka — to cite only the most distinguished masters — are known all over the world, their works have won the highest awards at major international exhibitions.

Such inspiration can also be detected in the works of Poland's two most distinguished sculptors: Antoni Rząsa and Władysław Hasior. Folk motifs and inventiveness is also drawn upon in applied art and in industrial design. An excellent example of adaptation of the traditional art of the Polish countryside is provided by the work of the Antoni Kenar team in Zakopane which inculcates in its pupils the skill of combining folk motifs with a modern understanding of artistic forms.

It should be stressed that in no field of fine arts do Polish artists merely try to continue and develop motifs of the folk art which was characteristic of their community. Folklore inspiration does not work directly; it produces new, original inventiveness, its symbols influence the artist's imagination and creative instinct. As a result, Polish art, while developing almost all the motifs and styles characteristic of the modern world, preserves at the same time its individual national character and originality.

## LITERATURE

### THE BIRTH OF POLISH LITERATURE

Our earliest writers were chroniclers writing in Latin: at beginning of the 12th century, Gallus Anonymus, a monk probably French origin, who was employed in the Prince's chancellery, behind a comprehensive chronicle which is both a priceless source historical knowledge and an outstanding literary work; he was followed by Wincenty Kadłubek, more of a moralist than a reliable witness the events of his epoch but at the same time a writer of elegant language and style; Gościłłow Baszko gave a highly interesting description of many Polish legends; Janko of Czarńków related the events of his life, gossip and intrigues with a reporter's passion; finally, Jan Długosz compiled in the 15th century monumental annals, which constitute a synthesis of Poland's history according to the state of knowledge that time.

In the same period, distinguished political writers made their appearance. Paweł Włodkowic, rector of the Cracow Academy, won fame at the Council of Constance in 1415 where he defended the bold thesis that the heathen must not be converted by force and dispossessed their lands. Another Cracow professor, Jan of Ludzisko, sought redress in his writings of the wrongs done to the peasants; Jan Ostrogowski a treatise in which he criticized the financial claims of the Papacy on the State, and the claims of the clergy on the faithful, and condemned the tribute known as Peter's pence.

Just as chroniclers praised the exploits of rulers, the authors of "lives" extolled pious and blessed men, such as the saint martyrs. Their "lives" are priceless sources of knowledge about the mentality and customs of those times.

Also of sacred character are the first specimens of literature written in the Polish language. The earliest are the *Świętokrzyskie Sermon* preserved in fragments, dating probably from the end of the 13th century, distinguished by their extremely carefully chosen vocabulary and by exceptional care for the rhythmic order of phrases, and

several later *Gniezno Sermons*, which are much more extensive and containing both for their artistic form and the wealth of legendary motifs and motifs they contain. Less artistic in form, often downright clumsy but interesting as a source of information on the Polish language of that time, are the *Psalter of Queen Jadwiga* from the first years of the 14th century, and a translation of the Bible from the middle of the 15th century, done for Queen Sophia. The extensive *Przemyski Psalter*, the best example of apocryphal literature in Poland, describing the life of Jesus and of the Holy Virgin, is a valuable relic of the literary prose of that period.

One of the monuments of Polish poetry is the famous hymn *Bogurodzica* (Mother of God), written down in 1408 but probably dating from earlier times. For several centuries it played the role of a national anthem.

Until the end of the 15th century, literature written in the Polish language was quantitatively modest — at least, few works from those times have survived to the present day — and, with a few exceptions, little more than a linguistic relic, of interest only to specialists.

The next century, however, was to bring a radical change. Among the whole host of men of letters, there appeared the first writers of independent stature, worthy of the Renaissance era, that Golden Age of Poland's history: the remarkably prolific Mikołaj Rej, poet and prose writer full of political passion, a moralist with a satirical flair; the profound thinker Andrzej Frycz-Modrzejewski whose works on the necessary social reforms made him famous in Europe, and — above all — Jan Kochanowski.

### THE CLASSICS OF POLISH LITERATURE

Jan Kochanowski (1530-84) is the only Renaissance poet in Poland and one of the few in the world whose poetry, while belonging to the history of literature, has retained all its freshness and attractiveness. It still touches the chords of human sensibility, it is close to the insights and feelings of modern man. Time has made its own selection from the rich and diversified works of Kochanowski; however, everything he wrote was distinguished by mastery of the art of poetry and mastery of language. His work exerted a formative influence on the development of literary Polish, which was only raised to a higher level during the era of Enlightenment and Romanticism.

From among the many interesting writers of the Age of Enlightenment, we should mention here "the prince of poets", Ignacy Krasicki (1735-1801), author of extremely witty fables and satires and of mock-epic poems of the kind popular at the time. The beauty of his style



and the sharpness of his observations, especially in the fables, account for the fact that Krasiński's fables and satires are still widely read for pleasure today. Krasiński was also the author of Poland's first modern novel *The Adventures of Mikołaj Doswiadczynski*, presenting a modern hero representing the gentry.

Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), poet and spiritual leader of the nation, was the first of the three Polish bards (Mickiewicz, Słowacki and Krasiński) whose genius enabled him to combine service to his country with an artistic mastery placing him beside Goethe, Schiller, Byron and Pushkin.

His first youthful lyrics written in Vilna already presaged his immense poetic talent and constituted a new literary and philosophical manifesto, Romanticism, appealing to feelings rather than to reason, drawing on folklore and at the same time aspiring to "transform the world" (*Ode to Youth*). These ideas found more mature expression in the Second and Fourth Parts of *Forefathers' Eve*, a dramatic poem in which Part 3, which is of a political character, was added ten years later which is the supreme masterpiece of Polish drama, still interpreted anew and produced on the stage to the present day.

During his forced stay in Russia, Mickiewicz wrote two cycles of sonnets to which few are equal in world literature as regards poetic art and a long poem entitled *Konrad Wallenrod* setting forth in symbolic form a political programme of action for Polish patriots. The full flowering of Mickiewicz's creative genius took place after the defeat of the November Rising. The above-mentioned Third Part of *Forefathers' Eve* recognized as the greatest achievement of Polish poetry, was written in Dresden; another masterpiece, *Pan Tadeusz*, a long epic poem, depicting in superb colours the gentry society of the early 19th century against the background of historical events was written in Paris. *Pan Tadeusz* and *Forefathers' Eve* together with Mickiewicz's sonnets rank beyond any doubt among the most magnificent achievements of world poetry.

Juliusz Słowacki (1809-49), the second of the Polish bards both in his lifetime and for a long time after his death remained in the shadow of the fame that surrounded Mickiewicz. Accused of aestheticism, failed to win a larger group of adherents either in emigration or in partitioned Poland. The Poles were fascinated by the works of his great rival and received with bad grace the bitter criticism that Słowacki did not spare his countrymen. It was only posterity that fully appreciated Słowacki's poetic genius, his philosophical depth, the unusual power of his imagination and his unequalled mastery in the use of the mother tongue. In the lyrical and polemic discursive poem *Beniowski*, in the unfinished work *The Spirit King*, in *Journey to the East* constructed as a poetic diary, Słowacki employed such brilliant innovative means

of poetic expression that the poetic techniques which were considered as a formal revelation at the end of the 18th century, seem secondary and relative in comparison.

Słowacki's major literary output was in the field of drama. He left behind a series of tragedies and dramas that were intended as a poetic revelation of the nation, from legendary to modern times. It includes some of the finest unfinished, fragmentary or of uneven quality but it includes such masterly works of Shakespearean power as *Lilla Wreath*, *Balladyna*, *The Silver Dream of Salomea* or the most famous *Kordian*. The only comedy among Słowacki's works, *Fantazyja* is one of the finest romantic comedies in European literature. Słowacki's drama, a constant item in the repertoire of Polish theatres, still awaits to be fully by theatres outside Poland.

Adam Krasiński (1812-59) is also considered as one of the Polish Romantic poets. It is interesting that this poet wrote his two most important works — the dramas *The Undivine Comedy* and *Irydion* — in prose. *Irydion* did not confine himself to national problems — his horizons were universal. He tried to show in his visions a catastrophic future for a world torn by social conflicts. This universalist and apocalyptic attitude reduced Krasiński's influence upon his countrymen, who sought poetry above all an inspiration to action aimed at reviving an enfeebled country.

Adam Mickiewicz (1821-83) was the most tragic and enigmatic of Polish poets: almost unknown and not understood in his lifetime, a wanderer and exile who died in an old people's home, he was not really discovered until a few decades ago. This romantic and lover of symbolism, who constructed ingenious but obscure phrases and poetic images, today has proved the closest to modern poetry, sunk in the labour of extracting from words unexpected meanings and associations.

Polish prose flourished in the last decades of the 19th century, in the period of positivism and critical realism. Of the numerous novelists writing at that time, the most distinguished were Bolesław Prus (the pen name of Aleksander Głowacki) and Henryk Sienkiewicz.

Bolesław Prus (1847-1912) won true fame posthumously. A journalist by profession, he left behind a huge number of weekly columns, collected in 20 volumes under the title of *Chronicles*; they are an immensely rich source of knowledge about life and customs in Warsaw in the last decades of the period. Prus's output in the field of short story writing is very valuable. He also wrote several novels, two of which secured his fame: *The Doll*, a superb picture of Warsaw society, and *The Pharaoh*, a novel on the problems of power, the action of which is set in ancient Egypt.



Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916) enjoyed incomparably greater popularity, above all owing to his *Trilogy*, a national epic depicting history of Poland in the difficult period of the 17th century; the session of Cossack, Swedish and Turkish wars provide a background for a thrilling plot presenting the adventures and vicissitudes of heroes. The *Trilogy* remains to this day the most popular work of fiction in Poland, it is known by literally everybody. Two parts of it, *The Deluge* and *Pan Michael* — have been made into motion pictures. The greatest renown abroad was won by *Quo Vadis*, a novel set in the reign of the Emperor Nero, which became a world bestseller and brought Sienkiewicz the Nobel Prize. The writer himself, however, valued most highly the third of his longer works and artistically the most mature, namely *The Teutonic Knights*, a novel based on the history of the conflict between Poland and the Teutonic Order, which ended with the victorious battle of Grunwald.

In the Polish literature of this period, two women held places of importance: Maria Konopnicka, a poet particularly sensitive to social wrongs, the originator of modern Polish literature for children, and Eliza Orzeszkowa, social worker and writer with a very broad range of interests; in numerous novels and short stories, she dealt with the problems of Polish society after the January Insurrection of 1863.

At the turn of the century, in the period of neo-Romanticism, there emerged in Poland several distinguished poets: Jan Kasprówic, Kamierz Tetmajer, Leopold Staff, Bolesław Leśmian, Tadeusz Miciński and above all, Stanisław Wyspiański (1869-1907), an outstanding painter and poet but first of all, a man of the theatre. He deserves to be recognized as a national bard no less than the great romantic poets. The main substance of his numerous dramas consists of a meditation over the meaning of history, a biting irony with regard to the present and a tragic vision of the nation's destiny. Wyspiański proclaimed the end of heroism and exposed the futility of the romantic attitude. When deriding the romantic, Wyspiański none the less followed the romantic traced out by them, recognizing the principle of "art in the service of the nation" and opposing the concept of art for art's sake. Among his many magnificent tragedies, "dramatic scenes" and tragicomedies, one — *The Wedding* — reaches the heights of Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve*, if not for the loftiness of its poetry, then surely for the weight of the national problems discussed. In the mainstream of Polish culture *The Wedding* and the ideas contained in it remain a constant intellectual provocation.

In the prose of those years, so abundant in literary talents, the foreground was occupied by Stefan Żeromski and Władysław Reymont. Stefan Żeromski (1864-1925) united in his work the positivistic a

positive vision of literature as "civic service", a great love for the national history and an immense sensitivity to social wrongs. A whole generation — those who began building an independent Poland in 1918 — had been brought up on Żeromski's works. Much of his prolific output of the 1910s stood the test of time, but some of his books — like *From the Earth* or *The Ashes*, a great epic of the Napoleonic wars — are among the finest works in Polish literature.

Władysław Reymont (1867—1925) was the second Polish writer (after Sienkiewicz) to receive the Nobel Prize, which was awarded to him for his descriptive novel *The Peasants*, a superb study of the life and customs of the Polish countryside of the time; this work first gained fame abroad and only afterwards in the author's own country. Reymont was a poet at heart but none of his many novels was equal to *The Peasants* in power of expression. His short stories are more highly regarded.

A contemporary of these two great novelists of the beginning of the 20th century was Andrzej Strug, a writer connected with the socialist group who still awaits the recognition he deserves.

### THE INTER-WAR PERIOD

The years between the two World Wars, when Żeromski, Reymont and Strug were still writing, were a very productive period in Polish literature. There appeared a whole pleiad of excellent poets and prose writers, various literary currents took shape.

A large group of writers, mostly poets, rallied around the monthly *Przegląd* (and later *Wiadomości Literackie*). The most famous and popular among them was Julian Tuwim whose exceptional talent manifested itself both in very personal lyrics and in sharp political satire, and even in light songs. Other members of the same group included Jan Lechoń (the pen-name of Leszek Serafinowicz), Kazimierz Wierzyński, Antoni Słonimski (also a distinguished journalist), and Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz — poet, prose writer and playwright and present President of the Polish Writers' Union, the doyen of contemporary Polish literature. Also initially associated with the weekly *Wiadomości Literackie* were the outstanding revolutionary poet Władysław Broniewski and two women poets of very high quality: Kazimiera Iłkiewiczówna and Maria Kuncewiczowa-Ilkowska-Jasnorzewska. A different road was chosen by the poets of the "avant-garde", who employed more innovative means of artistic expression — such as Bruno Jasiński, Emil Zegadłowicz, Czesław Miłobędzki, Józef Czechowicz or Julian Przyboś. The latter's work could be called "learned poetry" because it requires from the reader the ability to decipher complex metaphors.

Wacław Jastrun's work stands apart, with its tendency towards



classicism, and so does the poetry of Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński, master of the poetic grotesque, of absurd humour and captivated lyricism. To the public at large, Gałczyński remains to this day the beloved Polish poet.

In the field of prose, much renown was gained by Juliusz Kiedrzyński, author of a number of very well written novels, presenting a panorama of the political situation in inter-war Poland. Debut off the promising work of young Zbigniew Uniłowski who made his debut with the excellent novel *A Room to Share*. A number of books of value were written by Piotr Chojnowski, Jan Wiktor, Gustaw Morcinek, Michał Rusinek and Adolf Rudnicki; the latter, however, won his greatest success after the Second World War. The two foremost novelists of that period were women: Zofia Nałkowska and Maria Dąbrowska. Nałkowska, a master of psychological analysis, wrote works of great intellectual maturity, which constituted an important contribution to discussions on the moral problems of society. Her novels *The Border Line*, *The House on the Meadows* and, above all, *The Threads of Life*, as well as the small volume of essays on the Nazi camps *The Meditations*, are recognized as classics of the Polish novel. The main epic work in the literature of the 1930s is Maria Dąbrowska's roman fleuve several volumes *Nights and Days*, the most profound picture of the transformations which occurred in Polish society at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The inter-war period produced an exceptional number of women-writers: many excellent books, mainly psychological novels, were written by Pola Gojawiczyńska, Helena Boguszczyńska, Maria Kuncewiczowa, Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina, and others.

Among the whole pleiad of well-known writers of the 1930s recognized at the time, relative obscurity surrounded two outstanding writers who were to be fully understood and appreciated only by the following generation. The first was Bruno Schultz whose novels *The Cinnamon Shops* and *The Sand-glass Sanatorium* present a strange, grotesque and fantastic vision of small-town Jewish life, akin to the world created by Franz Kafka. Wider international fame was won by Witold Gombrowicz. In the opinion of many critics, a grotesque novel *Ferdynand* is the most original literary work of the inter-war period, a crushing satire on social myths and conventions.

Journalistic reporting of literary quality also thrived in the inter-war period; in the hands of Ksawery Pruszyński and Melchior Wańkowicz it reached the level of art.

## OUTSTANDING CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

Leon and Gałczyński, Nałkowska and Dąbrowska, Broniewski and others were still writing — some of them their best works — after the Second World War, in People's Poland. Gombrowicz died in emigration a few years ago. Iwaszkiewicz and Słonimski are still active, continuing, a bridge spanning generations of writers. *Fame and Glory*, Słonimski's epic novel in three volumes, is an excellent study of the attitudes in the face of historic events. Słonimski, without neglecting poetry, has remained most faithful to journalism, writing regularly columns for the press.

A noted but important episode of literary history was constituted by the work of Tadeusz Borowski, a writer of exceptional power of expression and intellect before his premature death. His stories of Auschwitz are the most shocking and probably the most profound analysis of the persecution of Nazi genocide to be found in world literature.

Another eminent prose writer who made his debut before the war is Andrzejewski, author of excellent short stories and novels; his *Waves and Diamonds* gained international popularity owing to the successful transposition of this novel to the screen.

Those who began their literary career in the 1930s include also Tadeusz Bradecki, who won worldwide renown with *The Bronze Gate* — a volume of behind-the-scenes essays from the Vatican; Adolf Rudnicki — novelist and essayist; Jan Parandowski, who celebrated ancient Greek and Roman culture in his works and who was awarded a bronze medal at the 1936 Olympic Games for *The Olympic Discus*; and Teodor Pruszyński — one of Poland's most original writers whose works mark an important point in the historical novel; he rejects its illustrative character and is interested solely in the philosophical, emotional and ethical developments of people's attitudes. Equally innovative are the works of Leopold Buczkowski who in *The Black Stream* and *The Doric Galley* has given us a shocking study of the disintegration of the personality in the conditions of terror and contempt for human dignity created by the last war. A third writer to move away from the beaten path of the realistic novel was Wilhelm Mach (*The Mountains by the Sea*) who demonstrated in an almost psychoanalytic manner the responsibility of overcoming the distortions brought about in the human personality by the war.

A similar path was taken in some of the works of two other leading novelists of the present day: Tadeusz Konwicki (*The Contemporary Nightmare*) and Andrzej Kuśniewicz (*Zones*).

More traditional ways of realistic writing have been chosen by Kazimierz Brandys who combines perfectly elements of fiction, essay and



journalism in his books, which are written in a polished and refined style; Stanisław Dygat — an excellent story-teller with a sensitive perception of human passions and a keen sense of irony; and Wojciech Żukrowski who is fascinated by Poland's experiences during the war but who has proved more interesting as a practitioner of the psychological novel *Stone Slabs*. Jerzy Putrament remains faithful to realism and to the principle of social commitment; his novel *Boldyn* a fascinating vivisection of the cult of personality. The traditions Reymont are successfully upheld by Julian Kawałec, who is preoccupied with rural problems. Widely read are authors devoting themselves mainly to war themes, like Bogdan Czeszko and Roman Bratny. Very good novels have been written by Tadeusz Hołuj, Igor Newerly, Józef Strykowski, Jerzy Broszkiewicz and Kornel Filipowicz.

Two non-typical writers deserve special mention. Stanisław Lem specializing in science fiction has given this genre a philosophical quality without losing any of its value as attractive reading; he is one of the few Polish writers most frequently translated and best known abroad, opening new and striking intellectual vistas. Melchior Wańkiewicz (1892—1974), in spite of advancing age, remained to the end a master of literary reportage written in a style so rich, original and versatile that in all Polish prose one can hardly find authors equal him for beauty of language.

Distinguishing themselves among the prose writers of the young generation are Tadeusz Nowak, Wiesław Myśliwski, Piotr Wojciechowski, Ireneusz Iredyński and Edward Redliński. The latter's parodistic novel *Kompielka*, depicting the life of an out-of-the-way village, has been recognized as the most interesting literary début of the past few years in Poland.

Poetry in Poland — like all over the world — has taken the road of experimenting with form and has lost contact with the broad circles of the public. Yet in this field there are also some artists of distinct talent. They include Miron Białoszewski, Tadeusz Różewicz (better known as playwright), Ernest Bryll (who also writes chiefly for the theatre), Stanisław Grochowiak, Zbigniew Herbert, Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz (who tends towards classicism), Wisława Szymborska, Maciej Borowicz and the already mentioned Tadeusz Nowak and Ireneusz Iredyński.

## POLISH LITERATURE AND THE NATIONAL LIFE

Polish literature has known periods of relative stagnation but a number of periods of magnificent flourishing. Poland joined the mainstream of European literary culture rather late, towards the very end of the 18th

century but this tardiness was made up for in the late 15th and, above all, in the 16th century. During the Renaissance, Cracow was for several centuries one of the most important European capitals — not only for its political and administrative importance but also as regards thought, learning and art.

During the 17th and the first half of the 18th century Polish literature was in a state of decline. The Age of Enlightenment brought a considerable cultural revival in Poland. In that period, literature began to reflect the progressive camp in its struggle for a reform of society and government in a modern spirit. The high cultural standards of the Enlightenment account for the fact that throughout the 18th century the period of the partitions the Polish nation did not undergo a complete cultural degeneration, but maintained the continuity of its culture and national identity. The Romantic period brought a remarkable flowering of talent in Poland. Polish literature joined the liveliest current of the European literature of the day and even went further: Mickiewicz wrote a unique political catechism which was professed by all the nations of Europe oppressed by native and foreign tyrants. As a political poet he surpassed Byron.

In the Romantic period, literature in Poland began to play a role that it has never been assumed by the literature of any other nation: it became a substitute for all the national institutions which were destroyed or almost destroyed in the enslaved country. The main and decisive function of the literature, its mission, consisted in preserving the Polish language, in maintaining the national unity of all Poles living under the three partitions, in propagating patriotism by recalling glorious pages of the past and inspiring faith in Poland's rebirth. Thus literature existed and developed so as to "give courage and put heart" into Poles. So it was during the Romantic period and so it was during the positivist period which, in the field of prose, left behind the most works that have remained very much a part of the Polish consciousness to this day. All the great writers of that period — Sienkiewicz, Prus, Reymont, Żeromski — in spite of considerable differences among them, felt themselves bound to above all guardians of Polishness; this earned them the admiration of their countrymen but, at the same time, it detracted to some extent from the universal nature of their works.

After the Second World War, Polish literature shake off its sense of mission in the subterranean period, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries — it is enough to read the writings of Wyspiański — in spite of the tendency prevalent all over Europe at the time, to detach literature and art from social commitment, although this trend found expression in Poland, too. It can best be seen in the works of Przybyszewski. This sense of a link between literature and the life of the nation, the belief in the social mission of literature, has been so deeply rooted in the Polish consciousness



that the myth of the writer as the teacher and educator of the nation persisted to the present day in the climate of Poland's social and cultural life. It must be said, however, that this mythology does not quite correspond to reality any longer — unlike in the 19th century — because both the historical circumstances in which the Polish people were living and the aspirations of the writers themselves have radically changed.

### LITERARY CRITICS

In Poland, like elsewhere in the world, modern literary criticism was born in the age of Romanticism. A distinguished representative of this discipline was Maurycy Mochnacki (1804-34), the author — among other works — of the study *On Polish Literature in the Nineteenth Century*. This theoretician of Polish Romanticism came out against the concept of classicist aesthetics. He declared that literature is the supreme and most important expression of the nation's consciousness; this formula was largely adequate to the situation of Polish literature at that time, which produced a number of outstanding writers who exercised "an over the souls" (Mickiewicz's phrase) of contemporary Poles. Similar theories were professed a little later by the progressive political writer and leader Edward Dembowski (1822-46). His aesthetics was based on the theory of the social mission of art.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Stanisław Brzozowski (1874-1911), literary critic and man of letters, won renown. He elaborated his own original philosophy of work. Analyzing the links between literature and social life and culture as a whole, Brzozowski stressed the importance of the moral commitment of writers, he insisted on the social character of a work of art, and formed a new type of literary criticism, closely related to modern philosophical and social knowledge.

One of the most interesting figures in the literary life of the period before the First World War and of the inter-war period was Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński (1874-1941), a doctor by training but a poet, satirist, publicist, essayist, literary and theatrical critic by choice. He was also a brilliant translator who translated into Polish well over one hundred masterpieces of French literature. In his work as critic, Boy-Żeleński was considered the enfant terrible of Poland's cultural life: he attacked the false pietism and traditionalism of ideological judgements current in the Polish departments of universities; he showed interest in the relationship between the personal biographies of great writers and their work. His talent as a polemicist and ironist earned Boy-Żeleński's work immense popularity but also sharp rebukes on the part of other literary critics.

His principal antagonist was Karol Irzykowski (1873-1944), who was a more colourful and complex a figure. He began by trying his hand at drama, short stories and novels, and only later on turned to literary criticism, a field in which he won well-deserved fame; he made up for his own failures as a creative writer by merciless though well-founded attacks on other writers. An inquisitive analyst and a keen nationalist, he struggled uncompromisingly for his own vision of literature, seeing its autonomous and basic value in honest intellectual freedom, capable of noticing and assessing favourably certain innovative trends even in Polish literature; he was also the first critic in Poland to underline the role of the cinema in modern culture.

### THE PUBLISHING TRADE

Publishing has a double task in Poland: it must not only satisfy the current needs of the reading public but also fill the grievous gaps in the libraries brought about by the war when 85 per cent of all public libraries and 90 per cent of all private libraries were completely destroyed. From the very first days of People's Poland's existence, publishing was accorded priority treatment.

There are in Poland 50 State and cooperative publishing houses. The work is co-ordinated by the Central Publishing Board attached to the Ministry of Culture and Art. In addition there are many publishing sections in various government offices, scientific institutes, institutions of higher learning and social organizations.

Works which are of cultural significance, but have no chance of being widely sold (and are therefore unremunerative from a commercial point of view) are published with the aid of special State subsidies.

and production in Poland is much higher today than before the war. In 1938 a total of 6,397 books and brochures were published with a total printing of about 29 million copies, the respective figures for 1973 were 41,826 titles and 143 million copies. Large printings make it possible to maintain book prices at a low level.

The best-known publishing houses, specializing in fiction, are the well-known Wydawnictwo Literackie and the Czytelnik Publishing Cooperative (both based in Warsaw), and the Wydawnictwo Literackie in Cracow. With a few exceptions, however, there is no strict specialization in the various publishing houses in Poland, and almost all of them include works of fiction as a part of their publishing programme.

All world classics have been published in Poland. The Polish reading public receive — with no more than a short delay, as a rule — translations of the more important or renowned new books to appear in the world.

## CINEMA

The history of the Polish cinema is generally dated from 1908, when there appeared a short farce entitled *His First Visit to Warsaw* with brilliant comic Antoni Fertner in the main role. In the period up to the Second World War Polish films did not play a major role in world cinema.

The first premiere of a Polish film to be held after the Second World War — Leonard Buczkowski's *Forbidden Songs* — took place in 1947. In the period between 1947 and 1955 there appeared 39 full-length films of a fairly uneven artistic standard. Some of them, however, stood out for the value of the artistry and ideas they contained, such as Jerzy Kawalerowicz's epic accounts of the fate of the Polish working class between the wars — *A Night of Remembrance* and *Under the Phrygian Star* — and Wanda Jakubowska's *The Last Stage*, about the martyrdom undergone by the inmates of Auschwitz.

### THE ERA OF THE "POLISH FILM SCHOOL"

The years 1955-61 made the Polish cinema — previously a non-factor in the international stakes — famous throughout the world. In this period there emerged a number of outstandingly talented young directors who were fascinated by the achievements of neorealism and the Soviet cinema in the twenties. They succeeded in hitting on the problems which most occupied Polish society at the time: the problems connected with the moral and political attitudes of the war years, the revaluations they underwent in the early post-war period when a new social system was being built in Poland. The organizational basis for the expansion of the Polish cinema at this time was the creation of the so-called film groups, autonomous groups of film-makers linked with one another by a kinship of ideas and artistic approach.

The Polish film school which emerged was characterized by three specific features: first, an obsessive preoccupation with the subject of human attitudes in the conditions of extreme danger caused by war, and secondly, a tendency to which each director had his own approach; thirdly, a tendency to use screenplays based on outstanding literary works. The Polish "literary" films, generally do not turn out well on the screen. The Polish experience is entirely different. Literature, which in Poland has traditionally exercised the "government of souls" (Mickiewicz), occupies itself chiefly with important political and social themes and their reflection in people's attitudes and actions, has been very successfully translated by film-makers as a source of inspiration. The third characteristic feature of the Polish school was the assigning of a very large role to the background, which was not treated as a background to the action, but as one of the most important components in a film, through its power to create specific moods and associations, and to provide symbols and sharp dramatic contrasts.

The Polish school was above all the achievement of two directors: Jerzy Wajda and Andrzej Munk. The former had already given evidence of an uncommon talent in the film *A Generation*, a story of the coming of age, about moral choices, about heroism and how to be evaluated; the romantic-tragic climate of this film provided the vehicle of the artistic thinking to which Wajda was to remain faithful in the years immediately following. Wajda's second film, *Kanal*, dealt with a similar subject, portraying the hopelessness — but also the heroic rationale — of the heroic attitude in the modern hell that was the Warsaw Uprising. In the history of world cinema there are few films which portray in a more shocking manner an apocalyptic disaster. These inevitably the heroes are fully aware. However it was the third part of this singular film trilogy — *Ashes and Diamonds* — which has received the greatest acclaim and is now considered a world classic. An unforgettable role was created in it by Zbigniew Cybulski, who died in 1957 at the height of his fame in a tragic accident. *Ashes and Diamonds* is a political film showing the tragic intertwining of human attitudes in the immediate post-war period against the background of the struggle for power. Both Wajda's films won awards at international festivals, *Kanal* winning the Silver Palm at Cannes and an award at the Youth Festival in Moscow, and *Ashes and Diamonds* the Critics' Award at Venice and the Silver Wreath in West Berlin.

Wajda's films were the antithesis of Munk's: to the latter's vision of the heroic and tragic heroism he opposed — in relation to the same subject — a matter of war and political conflict — a sceptical and ironic outlook, approaching a philosophy of the absurd. Munk mocks those who



undertake a hopeless struggle against the juggernaut of history, but the same time is in full solidarity with them; human dignity can only be preserved by opposing the verdicts of fate, even at the cost of one's life. This is the burden of the film *Eroica*.

The ultimate discredit of the conformist attitude was shown by Munk in the brilliant film *Bad Luck*. Munk did not live to finish his last film *The Passenger*, but the fragments which have remained permit us to suspect a masterpiece. The director succeeded in showing in full the Occupation years — the years of contempt, as they are called by the Poles — and the reality of the camps is seen not through the eyes of the victim but through the eyes of the executioner.

The third outstanding representative of the Polish school was Kazimierz Kutz, whose film *Cross of Valour* was a polemic against the works of Wajda. Kutz broke with the heroic legend, did not explain the attitudes of his heroes in terms of the operation of myth, but discovered other attitudes, such as peasant ambition.

Still other directors contributed to the success of the Polish film school of the late fifties and early sixties. Jerzy Kawalerowicz's *Mother Joan of the Angels*, a moving drama of rebellion against limitations of human individuality, has perennial value. Although the action of the film takes place in the 17th century, and in a nunnery at that, this in no way diminishes its wholly contemporary relevance. This film received the Silver Palm in Cannes.

An entirely new note of intimate lyricism was introduced into the Polish cinema by Tadeusz Konwicki, a writer of note who from time to time undertakes work as a non-professional director. He is obsessed with showing people "burdened by the war", who are unable to find in a world at peace, in normal life, a spiritual anchor.

Another famous film-maker who began his career when the Polish school was at the peak of its success, is Wojciech Has, an extremely sensitive director who delights in complex psychological story-line combined with expressionistic or symbolic sets which create an atmosphere of uncanniness. His most highly regarded film from that period is *How To Be Loved*, which also deals with the damage done to the human personality by the war.

Round about the year 1962 the Polish cinema had in principle completed its settlement of accounts with the recent past and began to turn to contemporary themes. Success did not come immediately. There followed in Poland a period of "seven lean years", only rarely relieved by the appearance of a film of above average quality.

But it was in this period that two talents emerged which were to win world renown: those of Roman Polański and Jerzy Skolimowski. Both began in Poland with contemporary social problems and it was in

the particularly difficult field that they won their spurs. Polański's debut with the film *Knife in Water*, a penetrating study of human psychology. Skolimowski began his career with the films *Identity* and *Marks: None and Barrier*, which attacked certain social attitudes with sharp sarcasm. The involvement of both those directors with the complex problems of contemporary life was a testimony to their intellectual curiosity and wide horizons, a testimony which was later confirmed abroad in films of quite a different kind.

## TODAY'S OUTSTANDING DIRECTORS

The seventies brought a surge of life to the Polish cinema and a large number of excellent films distinguished by a great variety of themes. For years the only first magnitude star among Polish film-makers was Jerzy Wajda. Each successive film he made met with a delighted response in Poland, although there were protests too, leading to fiery public debate. This was the case with the monumental film *Ashes* (after a novel by Stefan Żeromski), with *Landscape After Battle*, which was a return to the theme of the ideological changes which took place after the war, and with *The Wedding*, a masterly screen version of Stanisław Lem's famous play. This last film was hailed by a large part of public opinion in Poland as the most important cultural event of 1971.

In recent years, however, Wajda has acquired a worthy rival in the young Krzysztof Zanussi who while still a student at the Łódź school of film directors won many prizes for amateur films, and later scored notable successes with documentaries. His first full-length feature films *The Structure of a Crystal* and *Family Life* betrayed a great and original talent (the first won a prize at the Mar del Plata Festival and the second in Chicago). However Zanussi's last film was a real sensation: *Illumination* he made full use of his experiences and reflections from the period he spent as a student of physics and philosophy to produce a work portraying the quandaries of the contemporary world of science and its young representatives. It is a film with hardly any professional actors, while important roles are played by genuine luminaries of Polish science. *Illumination* was rated by many critics and a large part of the public as one of the most outstanding products of the Polish cinema. While other critics and cinemagoers received it very critically; such a divergence of opinion shows that in any event the film is out of the ordinary, evoking lively controversy.

A remarkable artistic talent has been shown in recent years by Kazimierz Kutz, who may be said to represent the "plebeian current" in Polish cinema, devoting most of his attention to the Silesian working

class. His films *Salt of the Black Earth*, and especially *Pearl in Crown* are reckoned to be outstanding.

Recent years have seen the production of historical spectacles involving huge crowds of extras. A specialist in such monster productions is Jerzy Hoffman who, after making *Pan Michael* (based on the novel by Henryk Sienkiewicz), went on to film the same author's *The Deluge*, the most monumental picture in the history of Polish cinematography.

Films continue to appear on Polish screens showing Poland's part in the Second World War. Jerzy Passendorfer, Stanisław Różewicz, Czesław and Ewa Petelski tend to specialize in this kind of film. Recently Bogdan Poreba made an excellent contribution to this genre with *Huślarz*.

Wojciech Has has remained faithful to films of an introverted, psychological nature. After making *The Doll* (after the famous novel by Bolesław Prus), he has recently made the interesting *Sandglass*, based on themes taken from the works of the outstanding "thirties" writer Bruno Schulz.

Janusz Nasfeter is one of the best directors specializing in films for children.

In the last few years, apart from Zanussi, quite a number of new talents have made their appearance in the Polish cinema. Among them are Henryk Kluba, Andrzej Żuławski (*The Third Part of the Night*), Grzegorz Królikiewicz, Sylwester Szyszko and Roman Zaiwsky.

#### SHORTS

If Polish feature films during the inter-war period represented a generally low artistic level, in the field of short films — both documentary and experimental — able film-makers were already beginning to make their appearance. This tradition bore fruit immediately after the war when talented representatives of the older generation like Antoni Bohdziewicz, Wanda Jakubowska, Stanisław Wohl, Ludwik Perski and Jerzy Bossak took up making shorts. Soon they were joined by a group of able young film-makers which included such people as Andrzej Wajda and Andrzej Munk who were later to win fame as directors of feature films. However the greatest successes were scored by the team consisting of Jerzy Hoffman and Edward Skórzewski. Their short film entitled *Attention, Hołigans!*, *Memento of Calvary*, *Łowicz Roundabout Selections For Today* and *Miracle Pair*, constituted a new type of journalistic documentary. No less renown was won by the shorts of Kazimierz Karabasz (especially *The Musicians*). Tadeusz Makarczyk created something in the nature of a short "philosophical" film essay and a similar path was taken at the beginning of his career by Róm-

anowski. His first film, the grotesque *Two Men with a Wardrobe*, immediately attracted world critical attention. The impressionistic studies of Władysław Slesicki introduced a poetic atmosphere. Tadeusz Jaworski and Janusz Kidawa concentrated their attention on problems of social conflict. Jan Łomnicki used the camera to create penetrating psychological profiles of the people he filmed.

Among all the directors mentioned later went on — with varying degrees of success — to feature films. However it was only the next generation of film-makers that turned to the documentary led by Krystyna Gryczek and Danuta Halladín. They are mainly concerned with observational problems in villages and small towns. Finally the youngest generation of documentary directors, enthusiastically applying the television method of interviewing people before the cameras, is represented by Krzysztof Gradowski, Tomasz Zygadło, Grzegorz Królikiewicz, whose debut film entitled *Through and Through* was recognized as exceptionally interesting, and Krzysztof Wojciechowski.

Polish educational films are also highly regarded at international film festivals. Many have found their way to the UNESCO film library.

The production of animated, cartoon and puppet films is also highly developed. In the mid-fifties two artists, Jan Lenica and Walerian Borowczyk, made a real breakthrough in this field, by introducing the techniques and conventions of trick films. Their methods were adopted and perfected by numerous young film-makers, among whom the most brilliant is Daniel Szczechura, who portrays with satirical zest the fate of man against the background of contemporary technological civilization. Some animated film series, such as *Bolek and Lolek*, have won popularity among young viewers in many countries.

The main customer for animated films is television which swallows up — and itself produces — a large proportion of documentary, educational, feature and above all serial films. Of the latter, two have achieved particular success in the world: *A Stake Higher than Life* about the extraordinary adventures of the Polish espionage ace Captain Janina and *Four Tankmen and a Dog*, both dealing with wartime events.

#### CINEMAS AND THEIR PUBLIC

Poland has 2,972 cinemas, of which 1,009 are located in the countryside. In recent years, as in most countries, the number of cinemas has fallen. For a long time attendance steadily fell away, as the number of television sets increased, but latterly this process has been halted, and attendance is rising again.



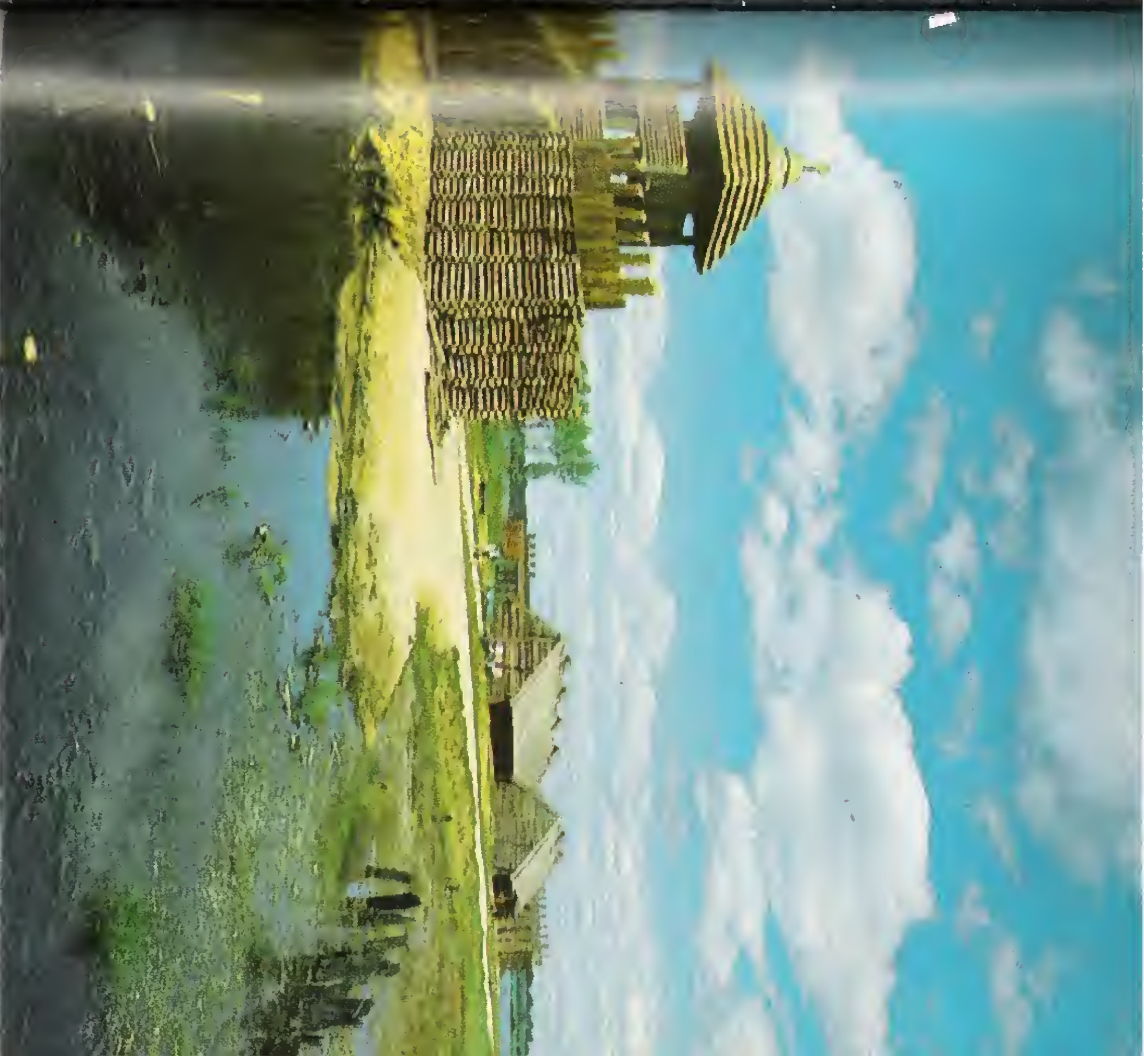
The majority of cinemas belong to the state. There are also cinemas belonging to the trade unions and to other civic organizations. Among state-owned cinemas, a special category is formed by the so-called studio cinemas, of which there are 164, which serve to popularize difficult or experimental films which are unable to count on success with the broad mass of the public. The studio cinemas, in which showings are as a rule preceded by brief introductory lectures, have a faithful and constant clientele among film lovers.

Another way of developing a deeper interest in cinema is through the activity of the almost 300 film discussion clubs, in which certain films are shown before their official premieres. These clubs also show archival films and special series of films linked by subject-matter as a basis for discussion, often with the participation of well-known critics and directors. In all these clubs muster 50,000 people in Poland from walks of life.

Hardly less numerous in Poland are the amateur film clubs whose members, individually or in groups, make films based on their own ideas. It was in clubs of this kind that such later well-known professionals as Krzysztof Zanussi and Daniel Szezechura began their careers.

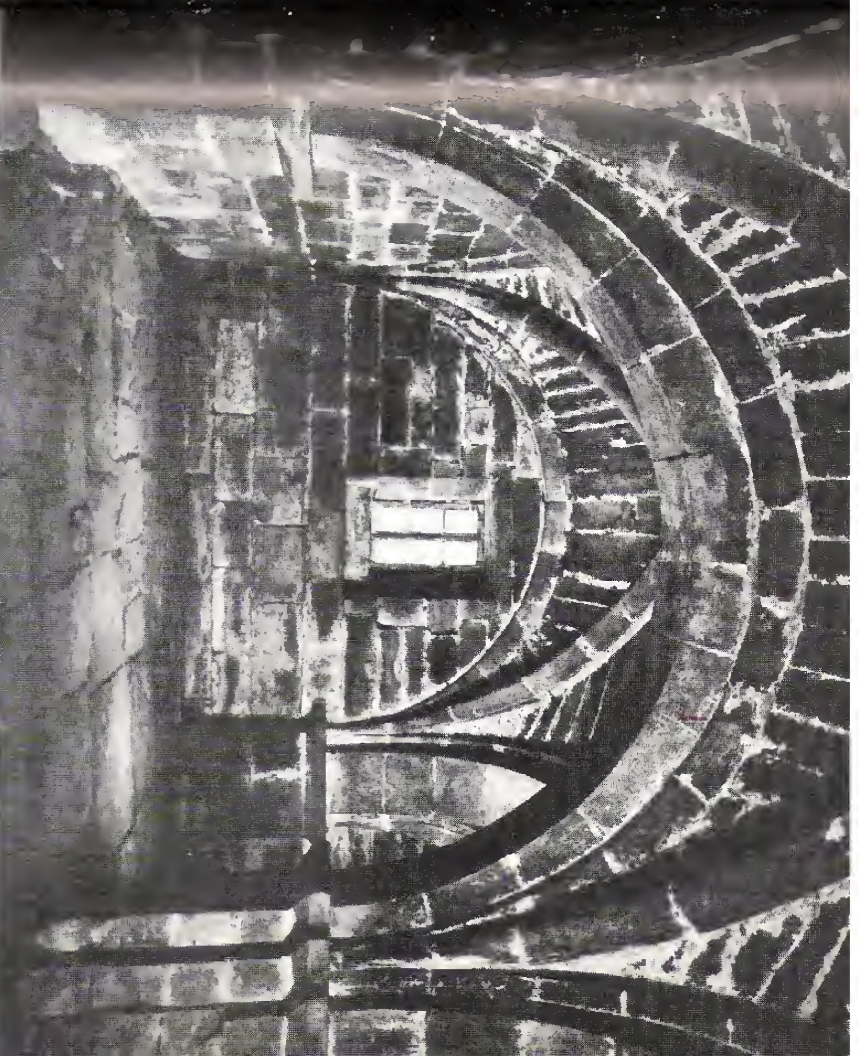
The systematic policy of encouraging cinema as an art form and fostering a more critical attitude among audiences to new films which aims are also furthered by the existence of a sophisticated film press — is showing encouraging results in Poland. It is no rarity in Poland for films of the highest artistic and intellectual value to have a greater success at the box office than undemanding comedies and thrillers.

Polish cinemas show about 180 new full-length films annually, which an average of 25 are Polish. Among the foreign group nearly all countries which possess a film industry are represented. Polish films are exported to many countries. The greatest export success so far has been Wajda's *Kanal*, which has been sold to 50 countries.



A section of the reconstructed fortified settlement dating from the Lusitanian period, established about 550 B.C., near the village of Biskupin





The refectory of the Cistercian monastery at Wachock from the first half of the 13th century with the cross-ribbed vaulting and buttresses, one of the earliest examples of Gothic architecture in Poland

A detail of the bronze door of Gniezno Cathedral, a masterpiece of Romanesque art dating from the latter half of the 12th century





The Krakow Cloth-Hall was embellished in the mid-16th century with artics characteristic of Polish Renaissance architecture

The high altar (1477-89) of St Mary's Church in Cracow is Wit Stwos2's greatest masterpiece and one of the largest Gothic altars to be found anywhere







The castle and cathedral — whose construction began in the 10th century — atop Wawel Hill in Cracow, the seat of the Polish kings. Here Polish monarchs were crowned and entombed. Today Wawel Castle houses the State Art Collections



the courtyard of the Collegium Maius of Cracow's Jagiellonian University, dating from the end of the 15th century

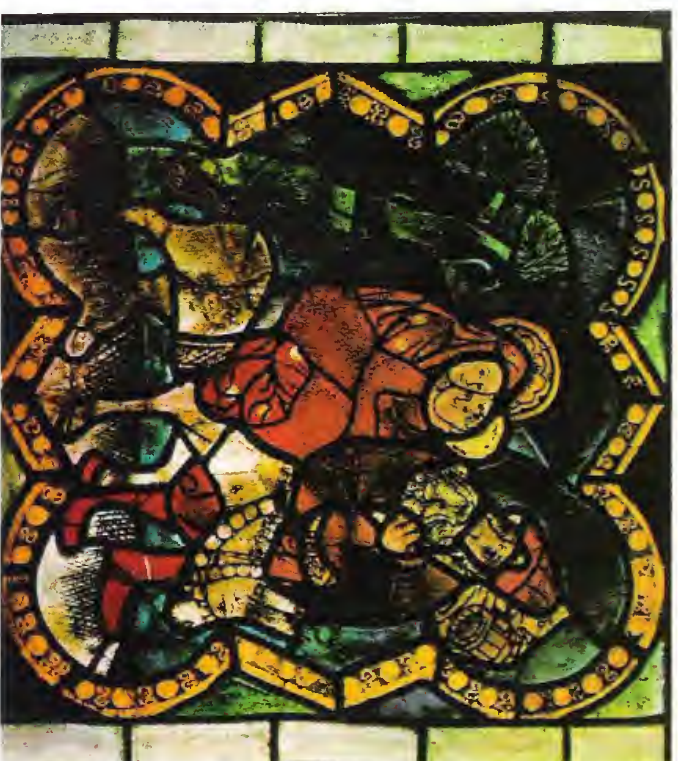




Panoramic view of Toruń, one of Poland's biggest concentrations of Gothic architecture



A 14th-century Gothic stained-glass window, on display at the Toruń District Museum







The Baroque mannerist Town Hall at Zamość from the latter half of the 17th century



The interior of the baroque palace erected in the late 17th century at Włanów by King John III Sobieski. Today it is a museum containing fine examples of 17th-19th-century interiors and a gallery of Polish portraits





Warsaw, Old Town Marketplace, 90 per cent of which had been destroyed by the Nazis and was rebuilt in 1953



Warsaw, the shopping centre in Marszałkowska, built between 1961 and 1970 according to a design by Z. Karpinski





Warsaw's Łazienki, a beautiful 18th-century palace-garden complex, was laid out for King Stanislaus Augustus Poniatowski, a great patron of the arts

*The Last Judgement*, the central part of a triptych by Hans Memling (1473). Property of the National Museum in Gdańsk







*Lady with an Ermine* by Leonardo da Vinci (c. 1490). Property of the Czartoryski Museum in Cracow



One of the rich collection of Flemish tapestries at Wawel, purchased by King Sigismund Augustus in the mid-16th century





Coffin portraits, an art form typical of Poland's Sarmatian period in the 17th and 18th centuries



Nicolaus Copernicus, as painted by Jan Matejko (1873). Poland's most outstanding figure of historical portraits and scenes





*In the bower* (1882), a painting by Aleksander Gieryski (1850-1901), a precursor of Polish impressionism

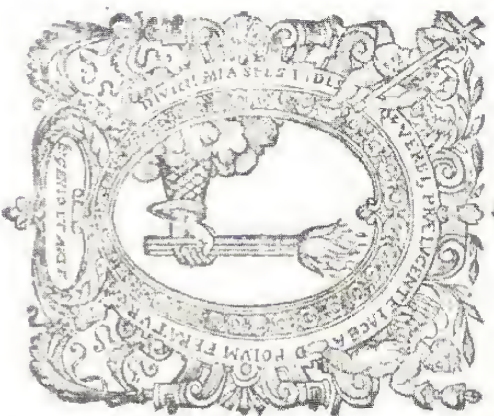


*The drinker* (1930), a painting by Tadeusz Makowski (1882-1932), one of Poland's most outstanding 20th-century painters



# MELODIÆ

## Ná Pŕalterz Polski, przez Mikołaiá Gomólke wczynioné.



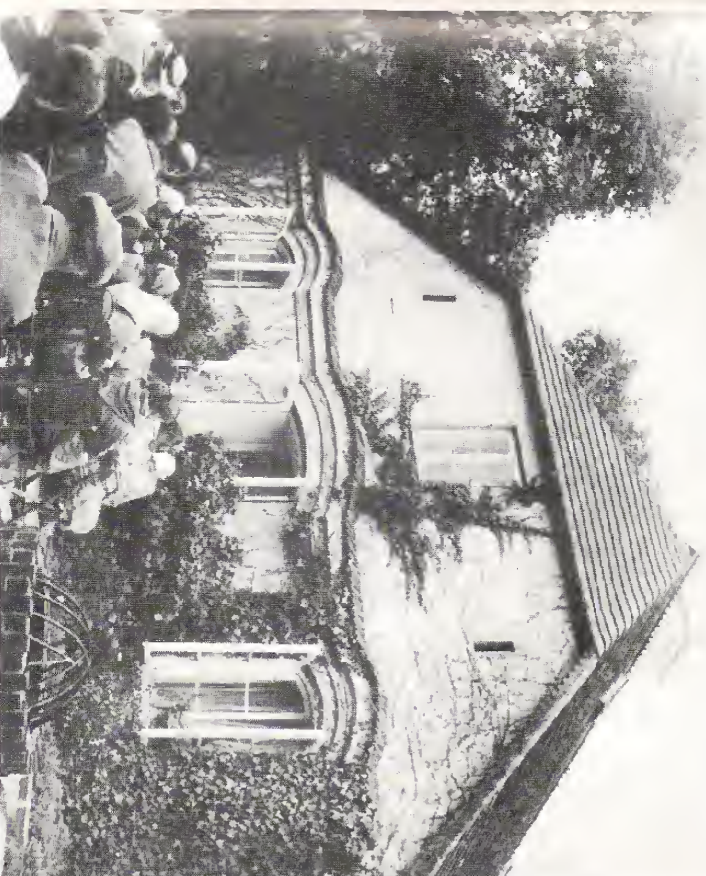
W Drukarni Łódzkiej: Xotu Páństwiégo  
1580.

The title page of the Polish Psalter (1580), composed by Mikołaj Gomółka (c. 1535–1591) to the lyrics of Jan Kochanowski

Fredéric Chopin (1810–49), Poland's most outstanding composer; a copy of his oil portrait painted by Antoni Kolb in 1848



A country manor, built about the turn of the 19th century at Żelazowa Wola near Warsaw, the birth-place of Frédéric Chopin, now a museum





Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937), an outstanding composer whose highly original style was based on Polish folk motifs

Ignacy Paderewski (1860-1941), composer and pianist of world renown, whose style exerted a visible influence on contemporary virtuosi

Stanisław Moniuszko (1819-72), second only to Chopin as the most outstanding representative of the national style in Polish music, was the creator of national opera



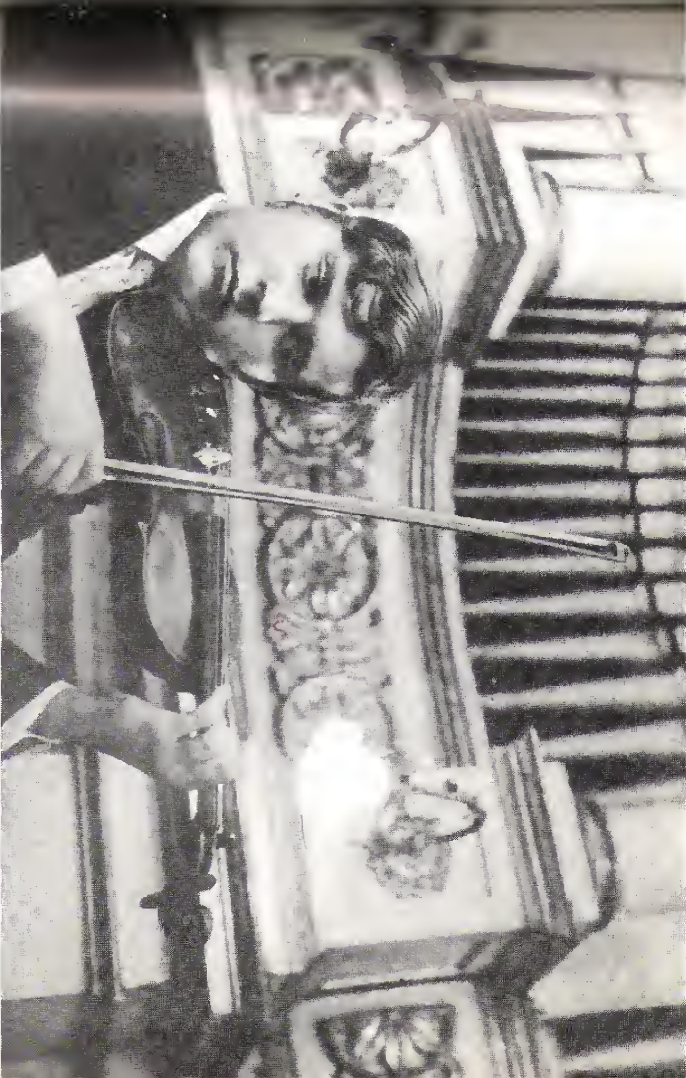




Witold Lutosławski (born 1913), composer and outstanding representative of Poland's musical avant-garde

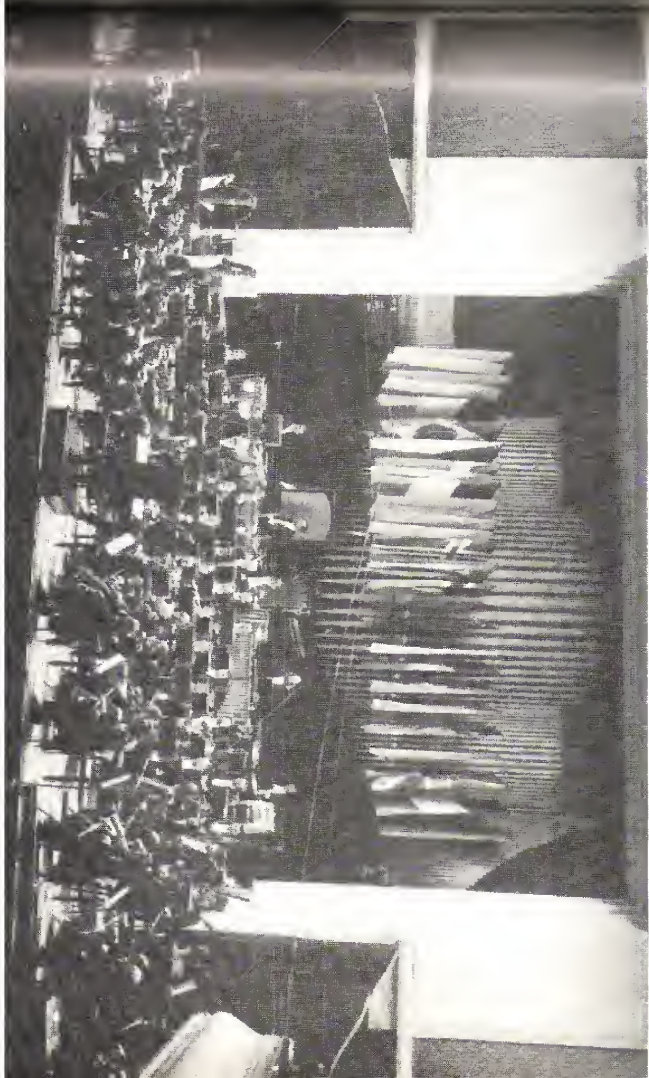


Krzysztof Penderecki (born 1933) is considered by many to be one of the world's greatest living composers



Krzysztof Kulka (born 1947), world-renowned violinist, began his career by winning first place at the International Violin Competition at Munich in 1966

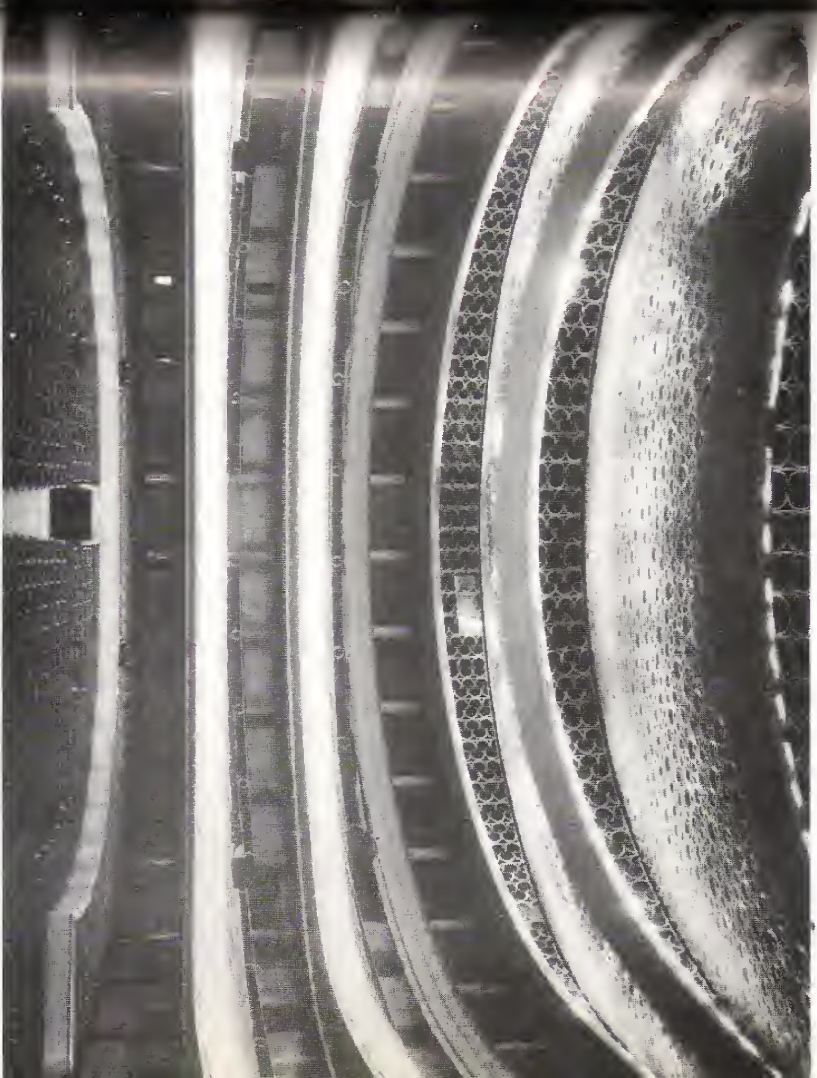
Autumn, an international festival of contemporary music held each year since 1956 in Warsaw's National Philharmonic Hall, is a review of latest avant-garde trends in the world of music





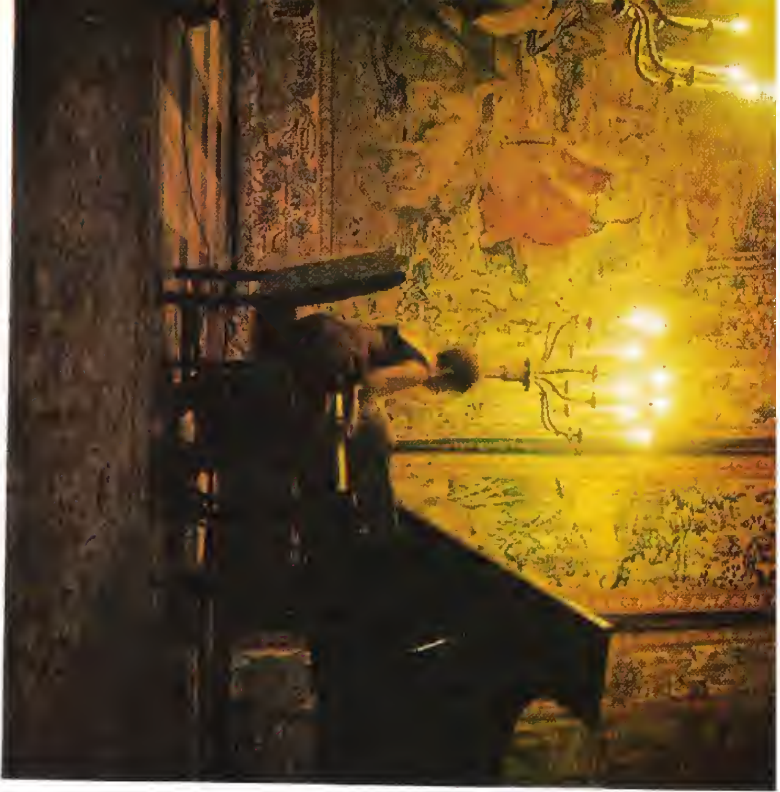


The male choir of the Poznań Philharmonic, led by Stefan Stulgrosz, has given concerts all over the world



Warsaw's Grand Opera and Ballet destroyed by the Nazis during the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, since its reconstruction one of the biggest and most modern opera buildings in Europe





Musical soirées held in the chambers of the Royal Wawel Castle in Cracow



Garrick Ohlsson, winner of the 8th International Chopin Competition held in Warsaw in 1970



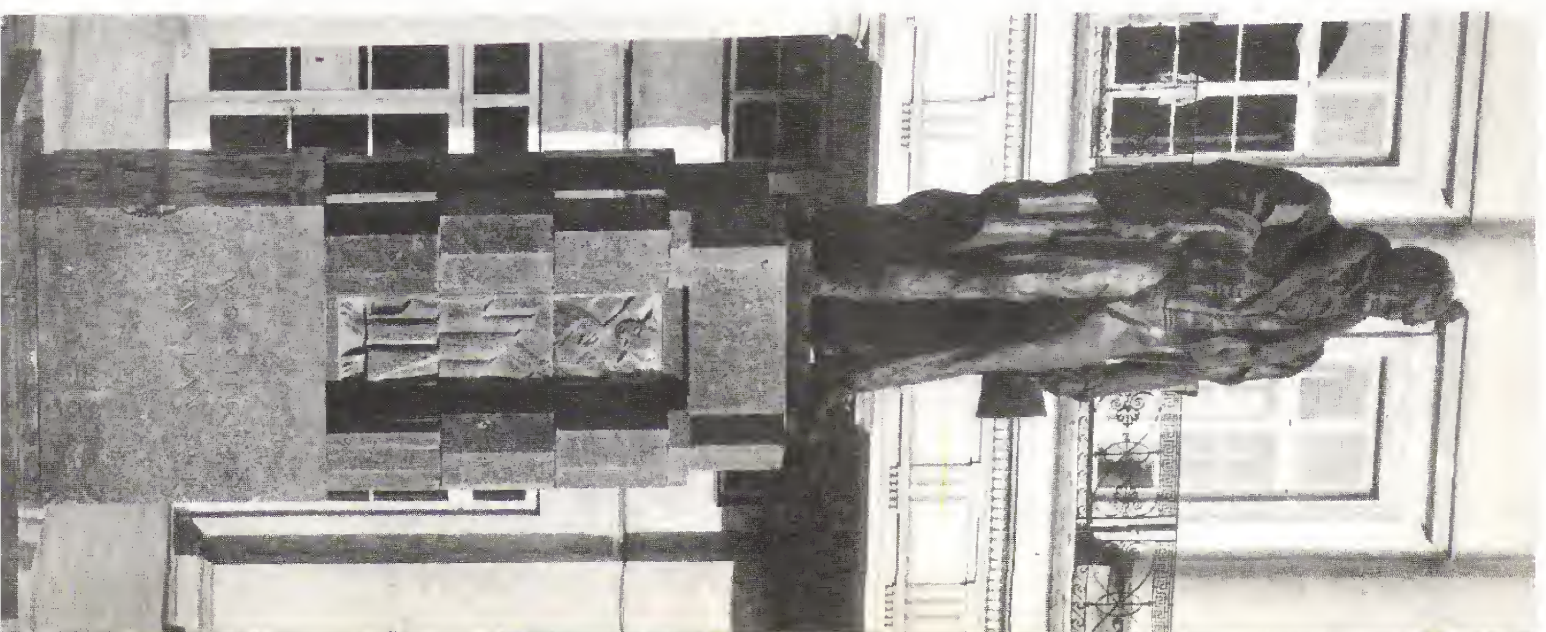
The Mazowsze Song and Dance Ensemble, known for its repertoire based on authentic Polish folk motifs



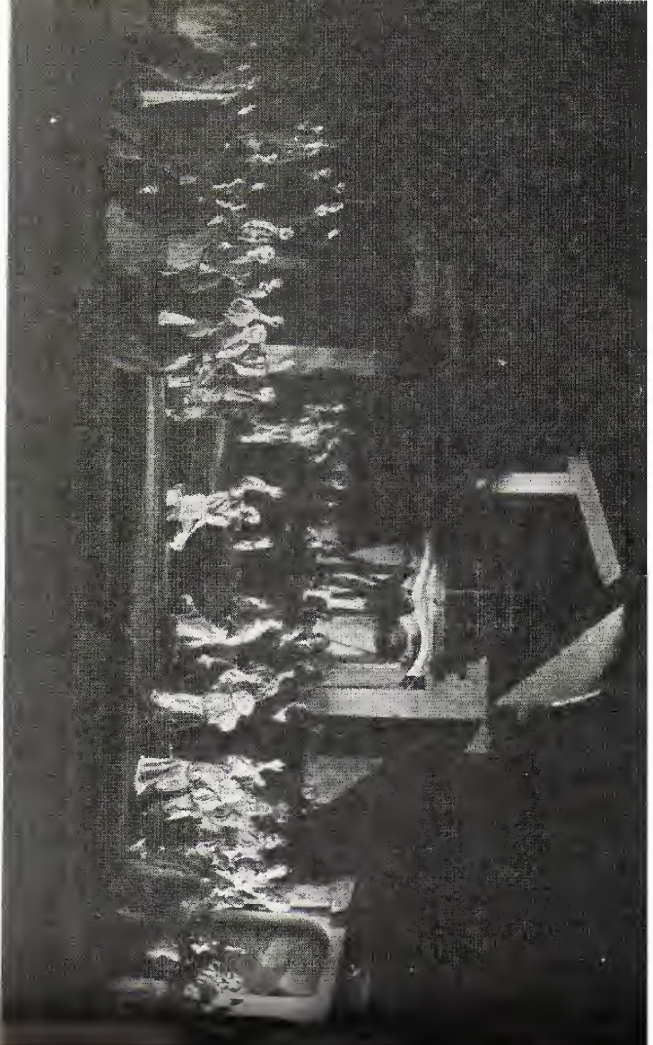
Each year the Sopot International Song Festival attracts singers from all parts of Poland and the world



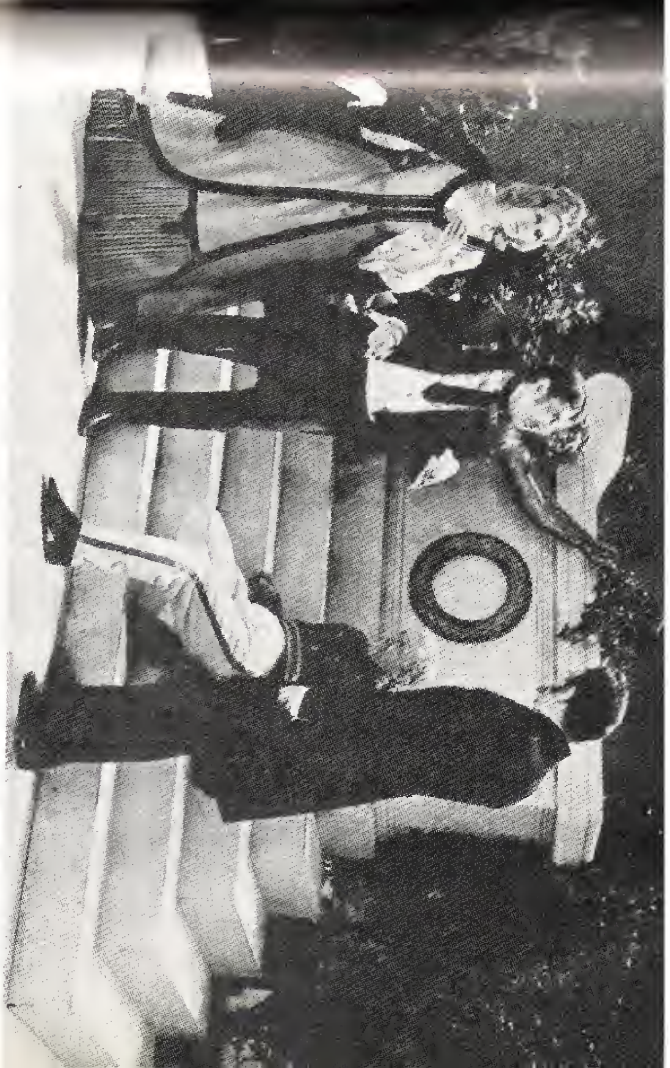
Włodzisław Bogusławski (1757-1829), actor, playwright, organizer of Poland's first professional theatre company and director of the National Theatre of Warsaw. In the photo: a statue of Bogusławski in Warsaw by J. Szepekowski







*Forefathers' Eve* by Adam Mickiewicz, directed by Leon Schiller, creator of the "mimic school" in Polish theatre; Teatr Polski, Warsaw, 1934



*Ludzie* by Juliusz Słowacki, directed by Gustaw Holoubek, TV Theatre, Warsaw, 1971



Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve*, directed by Konrad Swinarski; Teatr Stary, Cracow, 1971



*The Germans*, a play by Leon Kruczkowski, directed by Janusz Winiński; Teatr Akademii, Warsaw, 1967





Sophocles' *Antigone*, staged by Adam Hanuszkiewicz; Teatr Maly, Warsaw, 1973

Interior of the Teatr Maly, opened in Warsaw in 1973 as a branch of the Teatr Narodowy

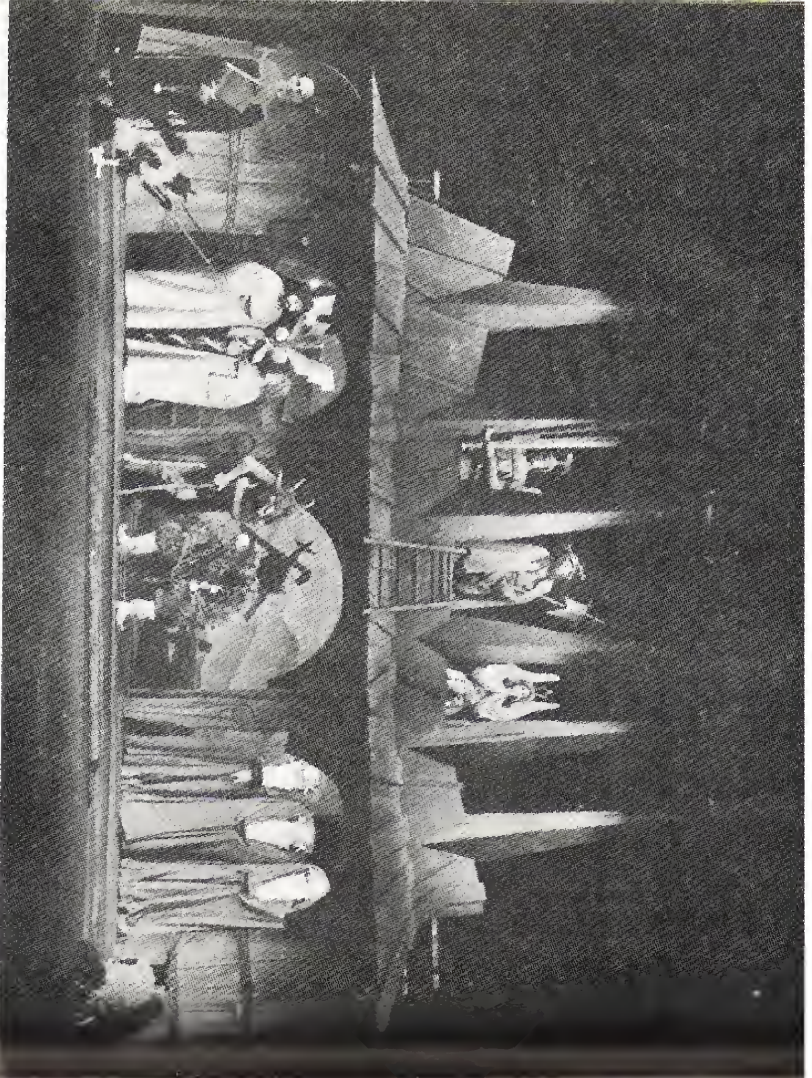
*Ipoclipsis cum figuris*, staged by Jerzy Grotowski, Laboratorium Theatre, Wrocław, 1968



*On All Fours*, a play by Tadeusz Różewicz, directed by Jerzy Jarocki; Teatr Dramatyczny, Warsaw, 1973



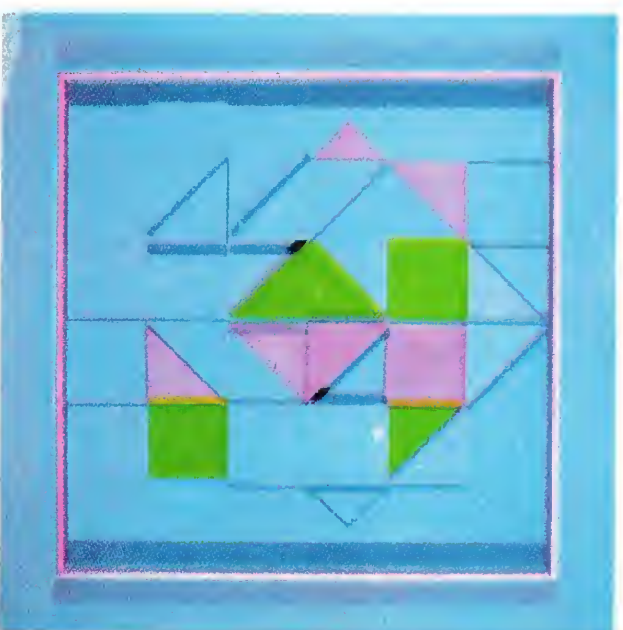




*History of the Lord's Glorious Resurrection* by Mikolaj of Wilkowicko (16th century), staged by Kazimierz Dejmek ; Teatr Narodowy, Warsaw, 1962



*Wiatrak*, (1959) by Jan Cybis (1897-1972), representative of colourism



*Picture No 27*, (1969) by Henryk Szażewski, one of the pioneers of geometrical abstractionism in Poland





*Landscape* by Tadeusz P. Potworowski (1898–1962), a colourist verging on abstractionism

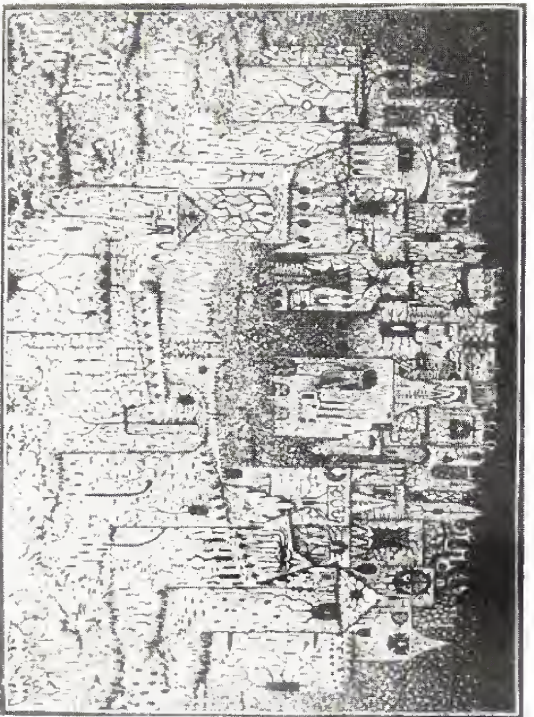
*Maternity*, from the series *Mexico*, (1958) by Tadeusz Kulisiewicz, outstanding graphic artist and illustrator



*Templum E S*, (1973) by Zbigniew Makowski, painter and graphic artist, creator of abstract compositions







*Sanatorium IV*, (1958) by Józef Giełniak (1932-72), an outstanding graphic artist known for his lino-cut technique

*Pregnant Women*, (1906) by Xawery Dunikowski (1875-1964), one of the most outstanding Polish contemporary sculptors



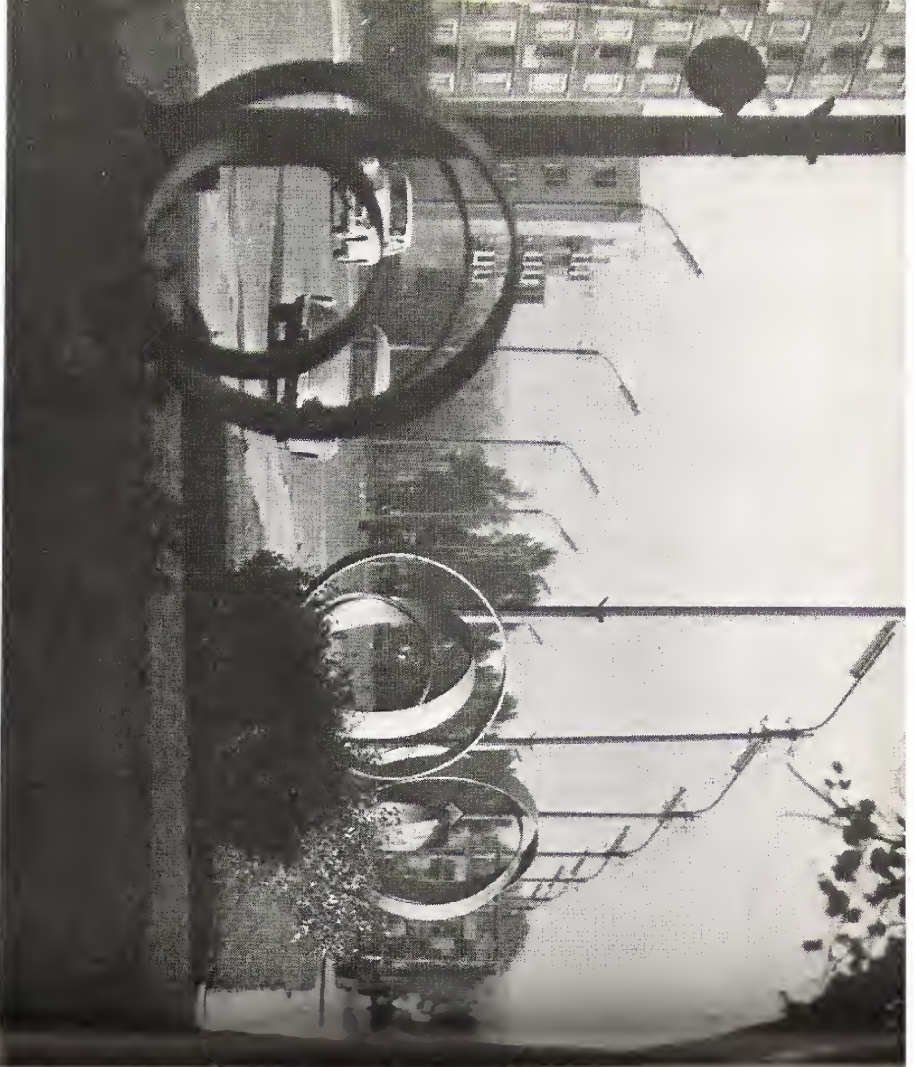
*Flamers* (1970-1972) by Władysław Hałajor, sculptor and creator of compositions combining diverse materials and elements, not excluding light and sound effects



*The Invincible Fallen 1939-45* (1973) by Gustaw Zemła, author of monuments commemorating the Polish nation's heroism and national-liberation struggle







A new form of contact between artists and public was initiated at Elbląg, whose collection of open-air spatial compositions is now well-known throughout the country

*Markci* (1972) a poster by Jan Miodoziński, the outstanding graphic artist and one of the founders of the Polish school of poster design

A poster for the film *Red Inn* (1955), designed by Waldemar Świerzy, a renowned graphic artist known for his masterful combination of artistic wit and decorativeness







A rich collection of posters may be seen in Wilanów near Warsaw at the world's only museum devoted to this art form

The Łódź Museum of Art contains Poland's largest collection of international modern art and organizes exhibitions of Polish modern art abroad





Part of the display in the Museum of the Polish Army in Warsaw; the nucleus of its collection are the historic arms amassed by the Warsaw Arsenal since the 17th century

The Gallery of Coptic Byzantine Art in Warsaw's National Museum contains a valuable collection of frescoes, columns, ceramics and decorative sculptures



*Basilisk* by Teofil Ociełka, self-taught painter in the primitivist tradition



Leon Kudła (1897-1964), self-taught primitivist sculptor

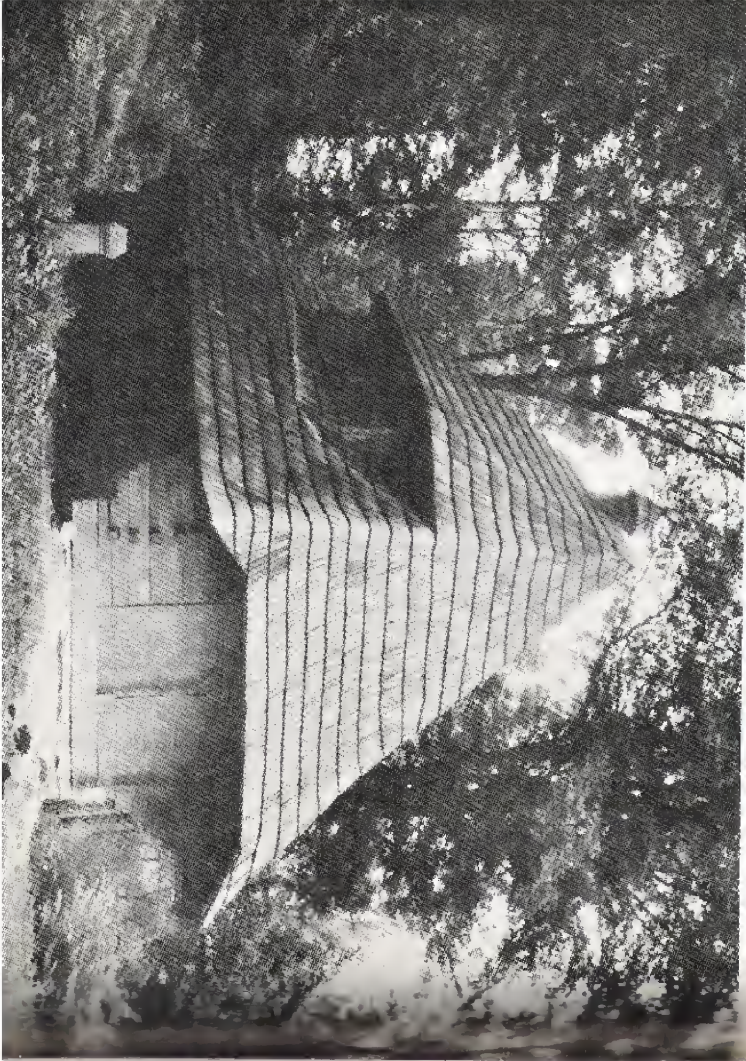




The village of Zalipie is a well known centre of regional folk art, where village women here are known to adorn their cottages and farm buildings with original floral motifs

The most valuable works of folk art are painstakingly collected by ethnographic open air museums.

In the photo: the 18th-century Orthodox church of Rosolin in the Museum of Folk Architecture in Sanok



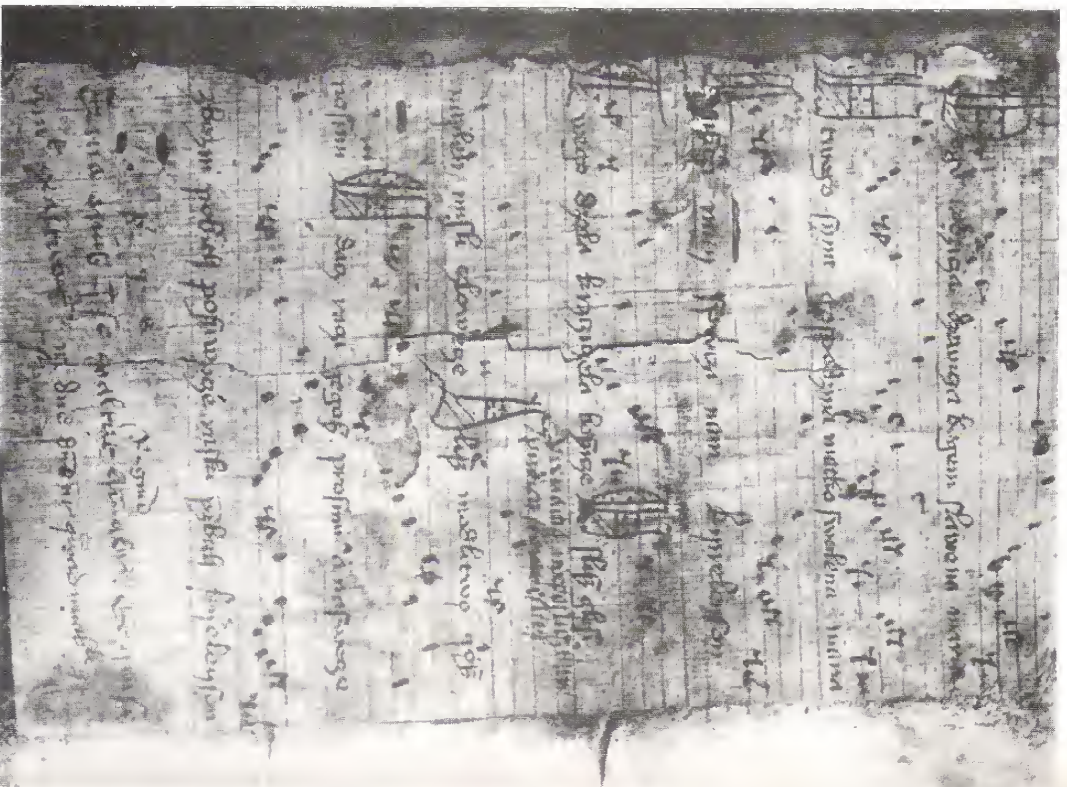
The tradition of building colourful, intricately adorned witches, which traces its origin to the Medieval nativity paintings, is still alive in Tycow



Painted on Glass, a folk musical directed by August Kowalczyk; Teatr Polski, Warsaw, 1970; the set design by Adam Kilian displays an intimate kinship with Polish folk tradition







*Bogurodzica* (Mother of God), the oldest Polish religious hymn, was sung by knights going to battle and by the faithful in churches till the end of the 15th century. In the photo: the oldest extant manuscript of the hymn dating from c. 1407



Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1885), Poland's greatest Romantic poet; painted by Walerj Wankowicz





Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916), winner of the 1905 Nobel Prize for literature, a portrait by Kazimierz Pochwański



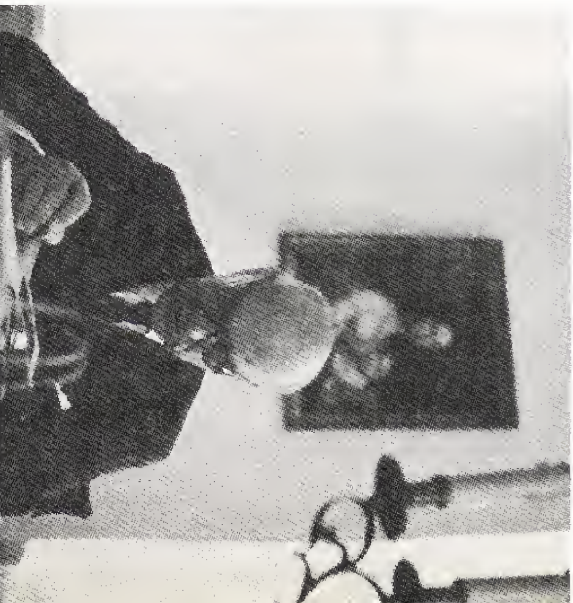
Władysław Stanisław Reymont (1867-1925), winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1924



Żofia Nałkowska (1884-1954), a novelist whose works are concerned with human psychology and social morality



Maria Dąbrowska (1889-1965), a novelist, whose works are noted for their realism, psychological insight and the portrayal of social manners



Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (born 1894), prose writer, poet and playwright, president of the Polish Writers' Union

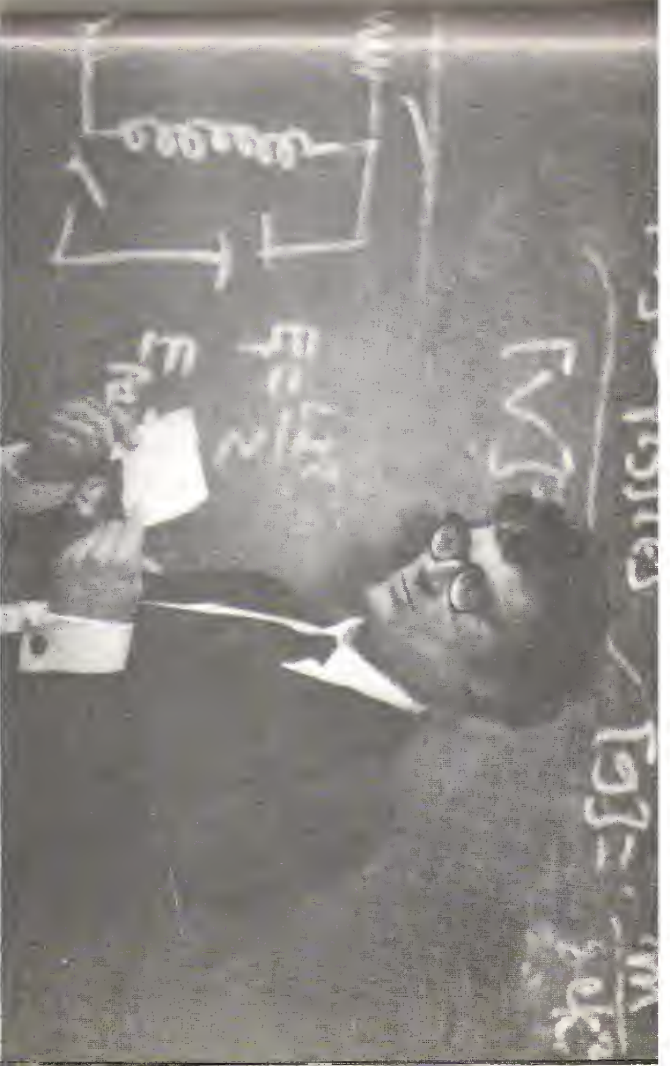




Scene from *The Passenger*, a film by Andrzej Munk (1921-61), winner of the Italian Critics' Award, Venice, 1964



Scene from Kazimierz Kuiz's film *Pearl in the Crown*, awarded the prize of the Golden Globe at Milan, 1972



Scene from *Illumination*, a film by Krzysztof Zanussi, Grand Prix at Locarno, 1973

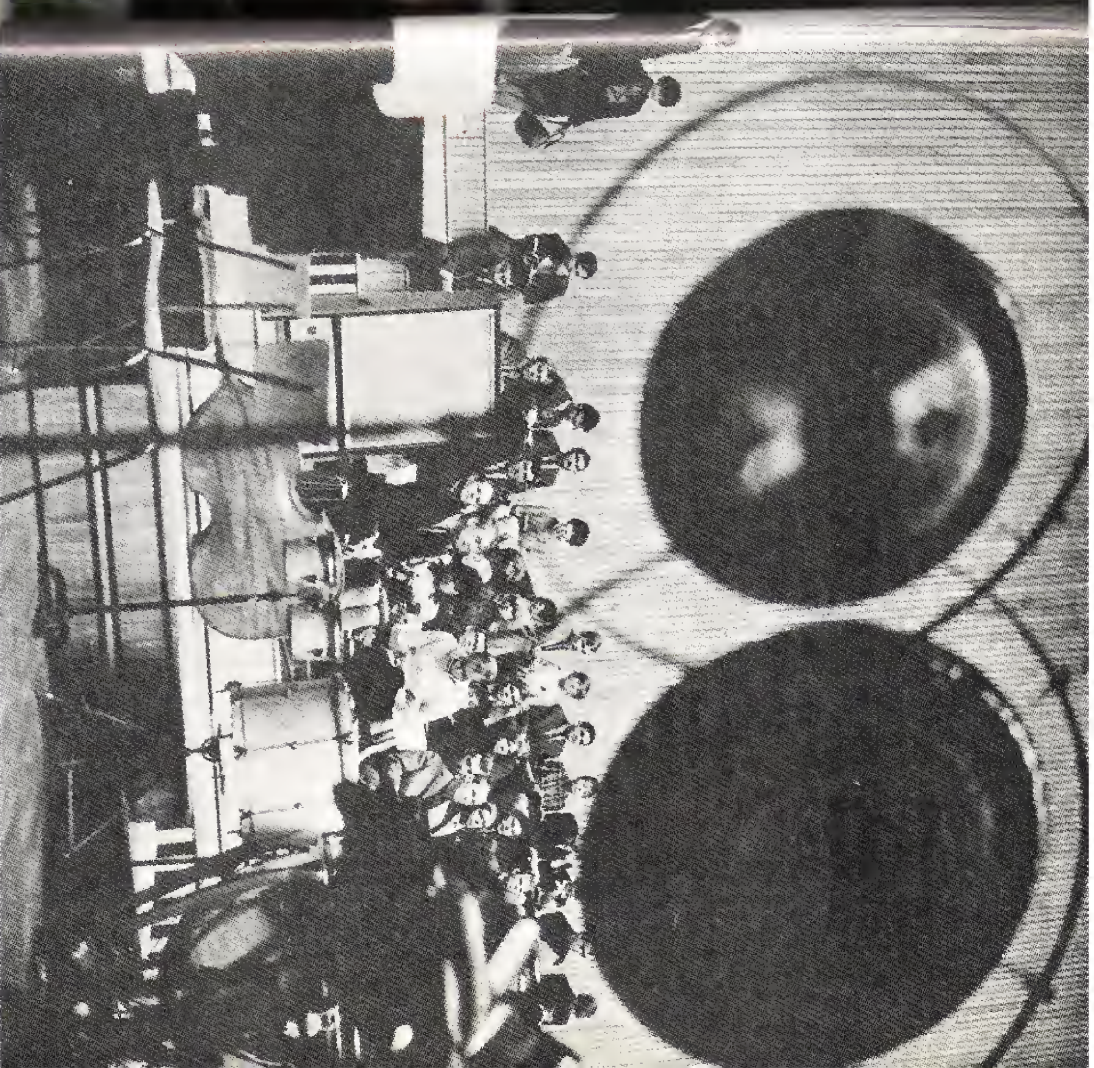


Scene from the documentary film *The Musicians*, directed by Kazimierz Karabasz, which won many international awards, including one at Oberhausen, 1961





Scene from *The Wedding*, a film version of Stanisław Wyspiański's play, directed by Andrzej Wajda; winner of the Silver Shell award at San Sebastian, 1973



Rehearsal hall in the modern State School of Music in Warsaw





The State Art College  
in Łódź

The Antoni Kenar  
School of Plastic  
Techniques at Zak-  
pane draws inspira-  
tion from the authen-  
tic folk art of the  
highland region

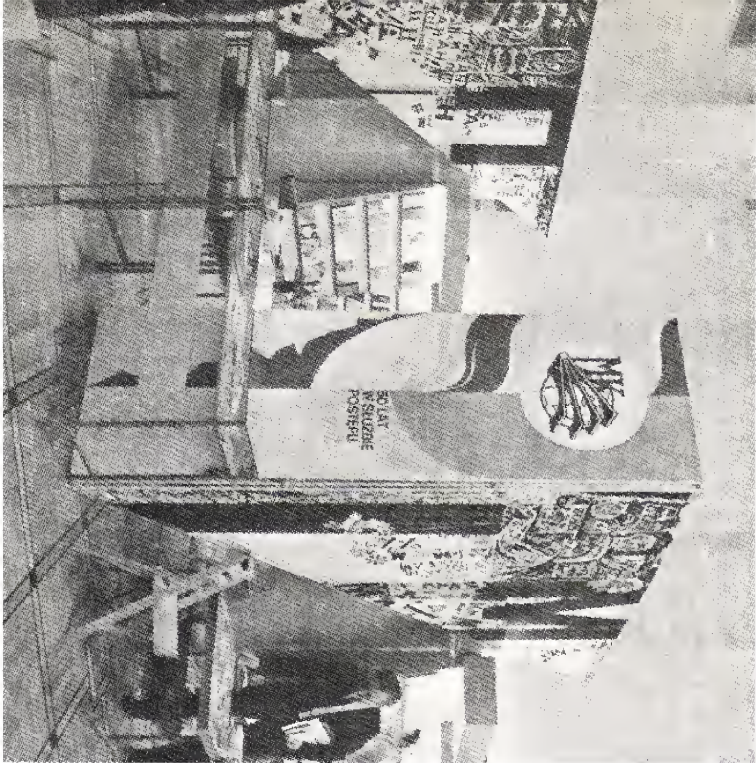


The State Film, Television and Theatre School in Łódź has turned out a great many out-  
standing directors, cameramen and TV producers





Each year in May during the so-called Education, Book and Press Days, book fairs are organized throughout the country. In Warsaw the huge square before the Palace of Culture and Science is filled with numerous book-stalls



The International Book Fair in Warsaw each year attracts attention of exhibitors from all over the world



The International Poster Biennale in Warsaw provides a periodic review of recent world developments in graphic art



## SCHOOLING IN THE ARTS

### MUSIC SCHOOLS

There exist in Poland seven State Higher Schools of Music in Warsaw, Katowice, Cracow, Poznań, Gdansk, Wrocław and Łódź. They are attended by over 2,500 students who, upon passing their final examinations, receive the title of master of arts. Besides such traditional subjects as playing various instruments, voice, composition, conducting and the theory of music, some schools of music have introduced new specializations. In Warsaw there are courses in sound direction with three possible areas of specialization: radio and television, musical recording and cinematography. In Katowice there is a faculty of popular music with specializations in composition and arrangement. In Cracow postgraduate courses in musical publishing are conducted for graduates in music and musicology. All Higher Schools of Music have faculties of musical education for training future secondary, school teachers and instructors of amateur ensembles.

The system of musical training at the elementary and secondary school levels is very extensive in Poland. There are at those levels 190 schools with about 35,000 pupils, including four schools of ballet for children. There are two kinds of elementary and secondary music schools: those devoted exclusively to musical education and those in which general subjects are also taught.

### ART SCHOOLS

Two of Poland's six art colleges — those in Warsaw and Cracow — bear the designation Academy of Fine Arts, while the remainder — in Gdańsk, Łódź, Poznań and Wrocław — are known as State Higher Schools of Plastic Arts. They are attended by about 2,500 students, and their teaching staff includes nearly all Poland's outstanding artists. After passing an examination and defending a thesis, art college graduates receive the degree of master of arts.



Poland has over 8,000 Press and Book Clubs spread throughout the country. In addition to selling newspapers, books and records, they also organize educational and artistic events



## CULTURE IN THE PRESS, RADIO AND TV

Art colleges offer the following subjects: painting, sculpture (both of which are accompanied by supplementary courses on architecture and other forms), graphic art, commercial graphics (posters, book and packaging designs, and — in Warsaw and Cracow — animated films as well), architectural interior design, laying out of exhibitions, industrial design, fabric and fashion design (in Łódź only), designing ceramic and glass forms (in Wrocław only), conservation of works of art (in Warsaw and Cracow) and — as a postgraduate course — set design (in Cracow and Warsaw).

In the whole post-war period nearly 7,000 students have graduated from art colleges.

At the secondary school level Poland has 22 lycées of plastic arts, which are attended by prospective decorators, artistic craftsmen and candidates for other trades. Such schools include the famous Antoni Kenar State Lycée of Plastic Techniques in Zakopane, which has developed its own, highly interesting teaching methods and even its own artistic style. These lycées have the character of secondary vocational schools and confer the status of *technik* ("technician") on their graduates.

### THEATRICAL AND FILM SCHOOLS

Poland has three university-level schools in this field — in Warsaw, Cracow and Łódź — which are attended by about 550 students who will receive upon graduation the degree of master of arts.

The State Higher Theatrical Schools in Warsaw and Cracow train both actors and directors; the Warsaw school trains musical directors (for operas and operettas) and also conducts a Postgraduate Theatrical-Literary School for theatrical critics and reviewers as well as the literary directors of theatres. In Wrocław there is a branch of the Cracow school which conducts courses in puppet manipulation.

Of somewhat different character is the world famous State Higher Film, Television and Theatre School in Łódź, where directors, cameramen and all those concerned with television and film production are trained in such specialized fields as the feature film, the documentary, the cartoon and the educational film. Candidates for courses in film directing must have already completed higher education of some other kind before being accepted.

Since the war theatrical and film schools have produced over 1,600 graduates, from whose ranks have emerged nearly all Poland's outstanding actors and directors.

The press, radio and television in Poland, in addition to their informative function, play an important role in the dissemination of cultural values, and — through their critical activity — in the joint creation of these values. The mass media — apart from a few periodicals — are the property of the state. This fact frees them from the necessity of having to pay their way (advertising takes up only a very marginal part of the activity of press, radio and television), but on the other hand obliges them to carry out the fundamental policy line of the socialist state, including cultural policy. The state, however, does not exercise this authority directly. Individual editorial boards are free to choose their own material and ways of presenting it. The press conducts frequent and lively discussions on the most various manifestations of culture and their ideological, moral and artistic values. The wide range of judgements and points of view quickens the pulse of cultural life, urging on artists and writers and encouraging the formation of conscious choices on the part of the public.

In the case of radio and television, which are under the central control of the Radio and Television Committee — a government organ with the status of a ministry — the situation is somewhat different. Programme policy is discussed first of all in the programme council which takes into account the general principles of the state's cultural policy, the problems put forward by the various organs of political and social life, the creative aspirations of those whose work goes into producing the programmes, and the demands of listeners and viewers, which are analyzed in detail by opinion research centres on the basis of letters and questionnaires.

Of the thousands of newspapers and periodicals which appear in Poland, a considerable proportion are concerned to a greater or lesser extent with problems of culture. All dailies and illustrated magazines, the most widely read of which run into editions of a million or more, have



cultural sections. However the main contribution in this sphere is made by the literary, cultural and socio-political weeklies and monthlies. Of the former the most widely read and highly regarded are *Polityka*, which runs an extensive cultural section, *Kultura*, which in turn also concerns itself with political subjects, *Literatura*, favouring, chiefly, as its name suggests, literary themes but also taking an interest in the rest of the arts, *Zycie Literackie*, reflecting the opinions of the Cracow world of letters but having a national character, and *Tygodnik Kulturalny*, which is addressed principally to readers in the countryside. Of the monthlies the best known and respected are *Twórczość*, *Miesięcznik Literacki*, *Odra* (published in Wrocław) and *Dialog* (devoted to drama). A specialized group is constituted by *Teatr*, *Przegląd Artystyczny*, *Ruch Muzyczny* and similar periodicals of a professional — as it were — character, which are intended principally for the artists in a given field themselves.

In its concern to inspire artistic creativity and arouse cultural interests, the press undertakes numerous initiatives: it announces writing competitions, which are open to amateurs as well as professionals, awards literary and art prizes and plays the role of patron to various festivals. Of very wide scope are the competitions for recollections and memoirs by members of various social and professional groups, the fruits of which — numbering tens of thousands of works — constitute at once valuable material for sociological research and a source of extremely interesting texts, which are printed in the press and published in book form.

It is a particularly important task of radio to foster musical appreciation. Half of the total broadcasting time of all three programmes of the Polish Radio is taken up by music (excluding programmes which include commentary or discussion). Serious music is allotted 25 per cent of all the programme time devoted to music. However, light music enjoys the greatest popularity among radio listeners. Among the most popular programmes are radio plays which are listened to by more than half of all owners of radio sets.

In Poland, as in the rest of the world, the most powerful of the mass media is television. In some regions the number of television sets has already surpassed the number of radios, and there is no doubt that in a few years this proportion will be the same for the country as a whole. Polish Television has two channels, of which the second has a rather serious character. An increasing number of programmes are being shown in colour.

Culture on television is given priority. The most obvious example of this is the film programme, from which — in accordance with the basic principles of Polish cultural policy — all films of a low artistic standard

or incorporating crude sensationalism or pornography, are excluded. Great renown is enjoyed by the Television Theatre, featuring the most outstanding actors and directors; it is not only the theatre with the largest audience in Poland — calculated to be during the most popular productions ten million people — but also a theatre which shows an enormous number of premieres. Every year Television Theatre prepares as many premieres as all other theatres in Poland. These figures bear an eloquent testimony to the significance of television's contribution to culture. If cinema attendance is about 15 times greater than theatre attendance, the respective numbers of viewers watching films and plays on television are almost equal to one another. Obviously even greater popularity is enjoyed by light entertainment programmes on television.



## THE DISSEMINATION OF CULTURE AND AMATEUR ACTIVITIES

The development of the cultural level of society is treated as one of the chief aims of the socialist state. Cultural policy in Poland aspires to realize this aim in many different ways: by keeping the prices of books, periodicals and theatre and cinema tickets at a low level; by various forms (described in previous chapters) of making music and drama accessible to remote provincial centres; by broadcasting programmes of cultural value on radio and television; and by developing the network of public libraries which now exist — on however modest a scale — in almost every village.

Also of great significance in this field is the broad development of a network of such institutions as houses of culture which — especially in smaller localities — play a vital role in social and cultural life, or the various village and factory clubs and the amateur societies run by them, devoted to such things as singing, dancing, photography, literature and poetry reading.

The number and variety of institutions of this type in Poland is enormous. Schoolchildren, in addition to receiving elementary artistic and musical training as part of their normal education, are also exposed to the influence of youth houses of culture, and there are special "station clubs" for young people who commute to school. There are also many thousands of clubs attached to schools, and every university or college has its own student club (some have several), as do most student hostels. All military units also have their own clubs or cultural societies.

The most highly organized institutions of this type are the houses of culture run by local people's councils and work establishments, to which access is universal. They generally have at their disposal a hall where plays or films may be shown, a café, and also rooms and workshops for various amateur activities. Houses of culture (of which there

are over 800 in the towns and about 600 in the countryside) engage in the dissemination of knowledge, culture and art, and organize various forms of entertainment. The largest houses of culture may have a permanent pedagogic staff numbering over a score and employ numerous specialists on a temporary basis. Large numbers of voluntary workers also collaborate with them. In the villages there are 2,800 cultural centres, generally run by local schoolteachers. Moreover there are about 1,500 centres of artistic and musical culture (chiefly the latter), which organize concerts, exhibitions and other events, and also run amateur courses in music, dancing and the plastic arts.

Clubs of various kinds are also counted in the thousands. In the larger towns there are 58 International Press and Book Clubs, which stock the Polish and foreign press which may be bought or perused in the reading rooms available. These clubs also sell records and art reproductions, in addition to organizing foreign language courses, exhibitions, lectures, talks by authors and concerts. In the villages there are 8,000 book and press clubs which organize educational and artistic events and where newspapers, books and records may be bought, in addition to 5,000 "Rolnik" (Farmer) clubs of a similar character. In the towns the number of factory clubs and community centres in new housing estates is approaching 10,000. Finally there are clubs which cater to special interests: theatregoers' clubs (about 1,500), film discussion clubs and amateur film clubs (together about 500), amateur photography clubs, amateur artistic, music and ballet circles, jazz clubs, clubs for connoisseurs of serious music, amateur choral societies, record collectors' clubs, etc.

The financing of all these activities is achieved in various ways: through subsidies from people's councils, work establishments, trade unions, cooperatives, and partly also from members' dues, the proceeds of performances and buffets, and fees for courses.

All the institutions mentioned have civic councils which direct their activity. This activity both makes culture available and accessible to a wider public and at the same time encourages individuals to make their own efforts in all fields of artistic endeavour.

The amateur societies, of which there are about 56,000, develop their activities within the framework of nationwide organized campaigns to promote culture conducted under such slogans as "Pro Musica", "Pro Sinfonia", "Pro Arte" and "Proscenium", and which organize national and international festivals, meetings of artists and discussions in particular branches of art, for musical, vocal, drama and variety groups, poetry theatres, cabarets, photographic, artistic and dance societies, puppet theatres, song and dance ensembles, and various other kinds of societies of art lovers and connoisseurs.



## CULTURAL COOPERATION WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES

The whole of this immense cultural movement is backed up by teaching programmes and publishing activities. All universities run courses for organizers of cultural life. Training and refresher courses for specialist instructors, both permanent and extramural, are organized by the Ministry of Culture and Art. In musical academies and art colleges faculties of music teaching and postgraduate courses in art teaching have been opened. There are also a number of journals which cater for the needs of instructors and organizers in this field in such matters as methodology and repertoire.

The most interesting and ambitious amateur ensembles have the opportunity — through local eliminations — of taking part in the national festivals and competitions held every year. The scale of these events is enormous — for example 100,000 people take part in the eliminations for the national poetry-reading competition. No less success is enjoyed by festivals of amateur dramatic societies, vocalists, amateur choirs, folk orchestras and singers, folk instrumentalists and story-tellers, amateur art groups and many others. Student festivals of art and drama often reveal talents which proceed rapidly to swell the ranks of outstanding professional artists. The amateur movement, although its chief aim is to awaken and consolidate cultural interests among the widest circles of society, also constitutes an additional — besides higher education — source of artistic talent.

Poland regards international cultural exchange as an important element operating in favour of consolidating peace, friendship and cooperation among nations. Our knowledge of one another helps mutual understanding. A country's culture in particular is destined to play the role of its visiting card to the whole community of nations. The development of international cultural exchange is favoured by the process of détente which at the same time it consolidates.

In supporting foreign cultural exchanges by all the means at her disposal, Poland has the following aims in view: the presentation of the achievements of her own rich culture in the international forum; the provision of her own society with wide access to the most valuable works of other nations; participation in the formation of the cultural heritage of the whole of contemporary humanity through constant mutual interaction with world culture.

Poland is engaged in cultural cooperation with over 80 countries, on all continents. She has signed bilateral treaties on cultural cooperation with 17 European countries and 23 countries outside Europe. These treaties specify the forms, areas, methods and financial bases of bilateral cooperation, and also constitute a foundation for the signing of specialist agreements between individual institutions such as theatres, museums, libraries, publishing houses, universities, colleges and creative associations. In the case of countries with which Poland is not linked by a bilateral treaty, cultural exchanges take place on the basis of ad hoc agreements between specialized organizations and institutions or commercial contracts between Polish and foreign agencies and enterprises. Finally there is the wide field of international, multilateral cooperation. Poland takes an active part in the work of UNESCO and 76 international organizations specializing in the field of culture.

The presentation of Polish achievements at various international events is conducted on a very wide scale. Every year Poland takes part



in over 100 international art and photography exhibitions and book fairs; Polish ensembles and soloists take part in about 80 international music and drama competitions and festivals; Polish films are entered at over 70 festivals.

Poland organizes every year about 300 exhibitions of Polish art abroad, between three and four hundred foreign tours by drama companies and musical and entertainment ensembles, and about 1,000 foreign tours by outstanding soloists. To Poland, on the other hand, over 500 foreign artists and over 100 ensembles come every year on concert tours. Poland also plays host to over 200 foreign exhibitions annually. There is also a highly developed system of exchange scholarships in the various branches of art. There also take place film exchanges and publishing cooperation in the field of translation.

The activities enumerated above, which are coordinated by the Bureau of Foreign Cultural Cooperation attached to the Ministry of Culture and Art, do not however exhaust all the areas and kinds of foreign contacts in the sphere of culture.

Specific tasks fall to the Polonia Society for Relations with Poles Abroad, which, as its name implies, is responsible for maintaining contacts with the millions of Poles resident outside their country of origin, striving to satisfy their craving for the Polish language, Polish music and Polish art. The attachment of people of Polish descent to their national culture does not only concern those who were born in Poland, but also their children and grandchildren. It is a particularly interesting phenomenon that members of the third generation who often do not know Polish, are quick to insist on their Polish origin and take a keen interest in cultural developments in the old country.

In a number of the capitals and large cities of Europe — Berlin, Bratislava, Budapest, Leipzig, London, Prague, Sofia, Stockholm, Vienna — Poland maintains permanent information and cultural centres which organize courses in the Polish language, performances by Polish artists, exhibitions and lectures. Polish associations of creative artists also maintain lively contacts with their opposite numbers abroad.

On the world scale Poland is a medium-sized country of medium economic development. These ratings bear no relation to the value of Poland's contribution to the universal treasure-house of culture, in most areas of which Poland is among the world front runners, which makes her an interesting partner for cultural exchanges and cooperation. And this fact, the fact of her close links with everything which is living, creative, progressive and humanistic in the cultural heritage of other nations, enriches in turn her own intellectual and artistic development.

## INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EVENTS

Every year in Poland numerous international festivals, competitions, symposia, exhibitions, meetings and plein airs are organized, as well as similar events of a national character but which are also open to foreigners.

Musical festivals and competitions have already been dealt with (see the chapter entitled Music). Here let us mention only the most important: the Frédéric Chopin International Piano Competition held every five years (next due in 1975), the International Festival of Contemporary Music known as Warsaw Autumn held annually, the International Festival of Old Music "Musica Antiqua Europae Orientalis" held every three years in Bydgoszcz (next due in 1975), the Henryk Wieniawski International Violin and the H. Wieniawski International Violin-making Competitions, both held every five years in Poznań (next due in 1977), the Oratorio-Cantata Festival held annually in Wrocław "Wratysłavia Cantans", the annual International Song Festival in Sopot, the annual International Jazz Jamboree in Warsaw and the International Choir Meetings held every five years in Warsaw (next due in 1977).

Among musical events may also be included the International Spring Variety Festival in which the socialist countries present their achievements in the field of light entertainment, the Łódź Ballet Encounters, the World Festival of Polonia (i.e. representing Polish communities abroad) Artistic Ensembles in Rzeszów, the World Festival of Polonia Choirs in Koszalin and two folk events: the International Festival of Highland Folklore in Zakopane and the International Festival of Song and Dance Ensembles in Zielona Góra.

Foreigners also take part in festivals of organ music held in Cracow, Oliva and Kamień Pomorski.

Plastic artists too have a rich international programme. There is the International Biennale of Graphic Art in Cracow, the International Poster Biennale in Warsaw, the International Modern Book Plate Biennale in Malbork and — also held every two years — the Exhibition of Painters from the Socialist Countries in Szczecin. Every three years an International Ceramics Exhibition is held in Gdansk and a Triennale of Graphic Art in Wrocław. Photographers present their achievements every two years at the International Photography Salon in Poznań, at the International Photography Biennale of the Baltic Countries in Gdansk and Malbork, and every year at the International Photography Salon known as "Venus" devoted to the female figure.

Foreign artists are also eligible to take part in the painting plein airs held in Olski, Kadyny and Białowieża, and in the sculpture plein air



held in Hajnówka. The last two are held amid the fascinating landscape of Europe's largest primeval forest.

In the field of drama and cinema the programme is more modest. The most important event, of established reputation, is the International Festival of Short Films in Cracow. Every two years the International Festival of Student Drama is held in Wrocław — an event which always arouses great interest — and the International Festival of Puppet Theatres in Bielsko-Biala.

An important cultural event is the annual International Book Fair, held in Warsaw, at which the latest Polish and foreign publications are presented.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF CULTURAL ACTIVITY IN POLAND

The supreme organ of state administration in the field of culture is the Ministry of Culture and Art, whose area of competence embraces the following tasks:

- (i) the realization of the State's cultural policy and coordination of the activities of all state, civic and economic institutions in this field;
- (ii) the creation of conditions favourable to artistic development and the extending of protection to artists and those active in the cultural field;
- (iii) the creation of the material conditions necessary for libraries, museums and monument conservationists to conduct their activities;
- (iv) the organization of artistic education and the laying down of syllabi;
- (v) supervision over the activities of artistic, film, stage, printing, publishing, phonographic and book-retail enterprises;
- (vi) the assigning of tasks in the production and distribution of films;
- (vii) cultural cooperation with foreign countries.

The financial expenditure of the Ministry of Culture and Art is included in the State budget. This, however, is not the only expenditure assigned for cultural purposes. Creative associations (writers, theatre and film artists, plastic artists, composers and musicians), besides ministry subsidies, also dispose of funds from other sources, which are earmarked for various kinds of grants, allowances, pensions and awards for artists. The trade unions, cooperatives, youth organizations and the armed forces all have large funds both for supporting individual artists and for mass cultural activity.

The chief principle of the realization of cultural policy in Poland is the community of action between the state administration (above all the Ministry of Culture and Art and its subordinate organs) on the one hand and civic organizations and institutions on the other. Among the latter — besides the creative associations — a large role is played by



the several hundred regional and local socio-cultural societies which see to it that the areas which they represent take an increasingly active part in the cultural life of the country as a whole.

A key element in understanding the position of the arts — and of the individual artist — in a socialist society is the fact of their liberation from commercialism. The State in a sense takes upon itself the material risks involved in producing a work of art. Writers, directors, composers, choreographers and plastic artists may count on their works being purchased and distributed — as long as these works possess a value recognized by experts, critics and scholars — irrespective of market demand. Should a work be out of tune with current tastes and bring its author no financial gain, the State — through its various institutions and by diverse methods — guarantees him compensation. The very existence of certain branches of art, for example poetry, is dependent to a decisive degree on state patronage. Cultural policy takes account of such phenomena in the life of the artist as creative ups and downs, and also takes account of the fact that the most innovative or avant-garde works are highly unlikely to win public approval straight away.

The ultimate basis of all activities in the field of culture is the plan for the development of culture and art in Poland, which is an integral part of the national economic plan and the state budget. A fundamental provision of this plan is the fullest satisfaction of social needs in the sphere of culture and art by developing their material base (building theatres, cinemas, museums, libraries, houses of culture, etc.), their patronage and dissemination, and the training of personnel. The plan also lays down the sums which are essential for those purposes and where they are to come from; most of them come out of the state budget. The rate of increase in expenditure on culture and art is somewhat faster than the rate of growth of the national income.

In addition to the annual and five-year plans, long-term prognoses of cultural development are also drawn up. Such a prognosis was prepared with the participation of a large number of experts in 1973, embracing the period up to the year 1990. It is the subject of profound and universal discussion conducted both in the institutions concerned and in the national press. This lively interest testifies to the significance attached by Polish society to the development of culture.

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